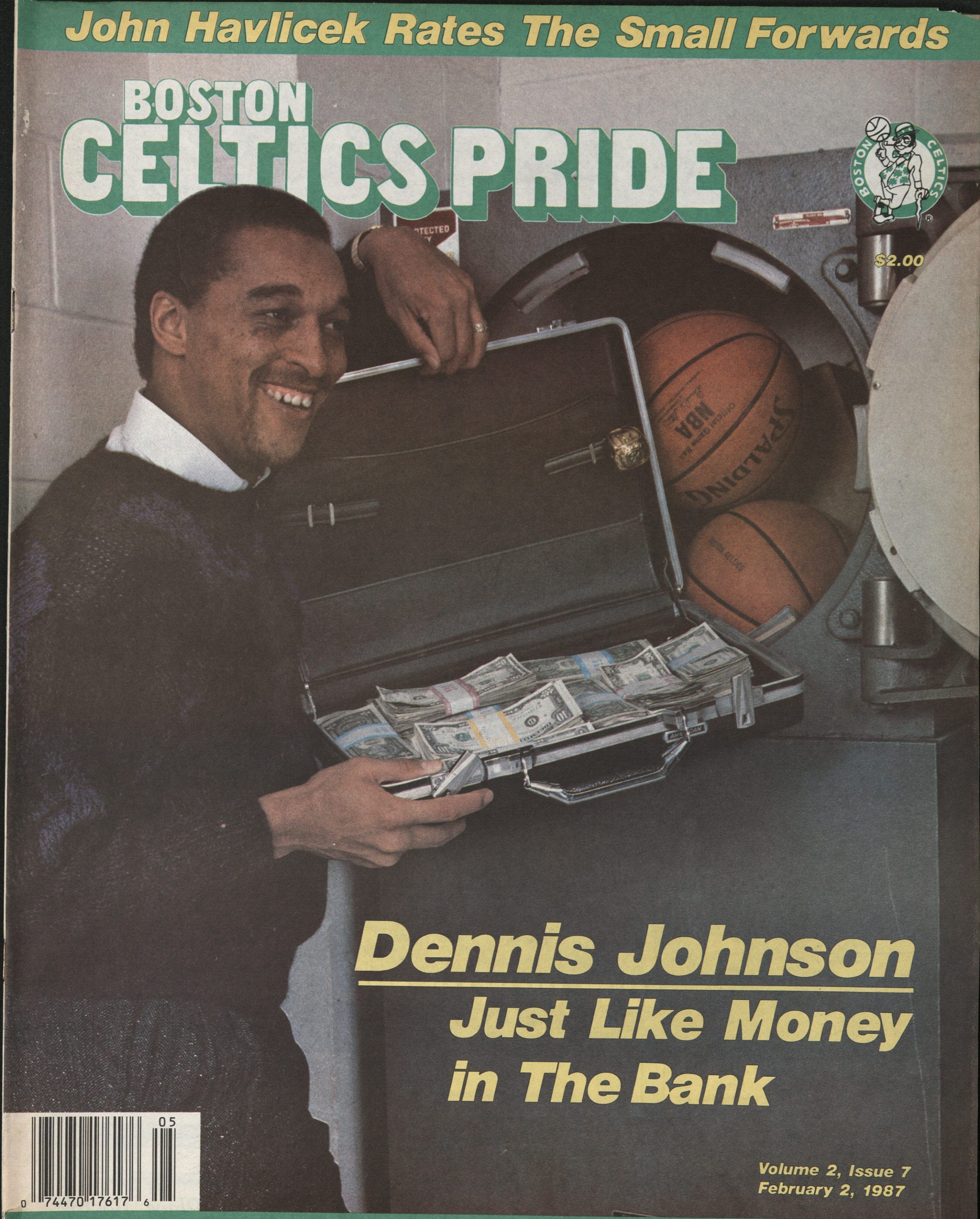
John Havlicek Rates The Small Forwards

BOSTON CELTICS PRIDE

$2.00



Dennis Johnson
Just Like Money in The Bank

Volume 2, Issue 7
February 2, 1987

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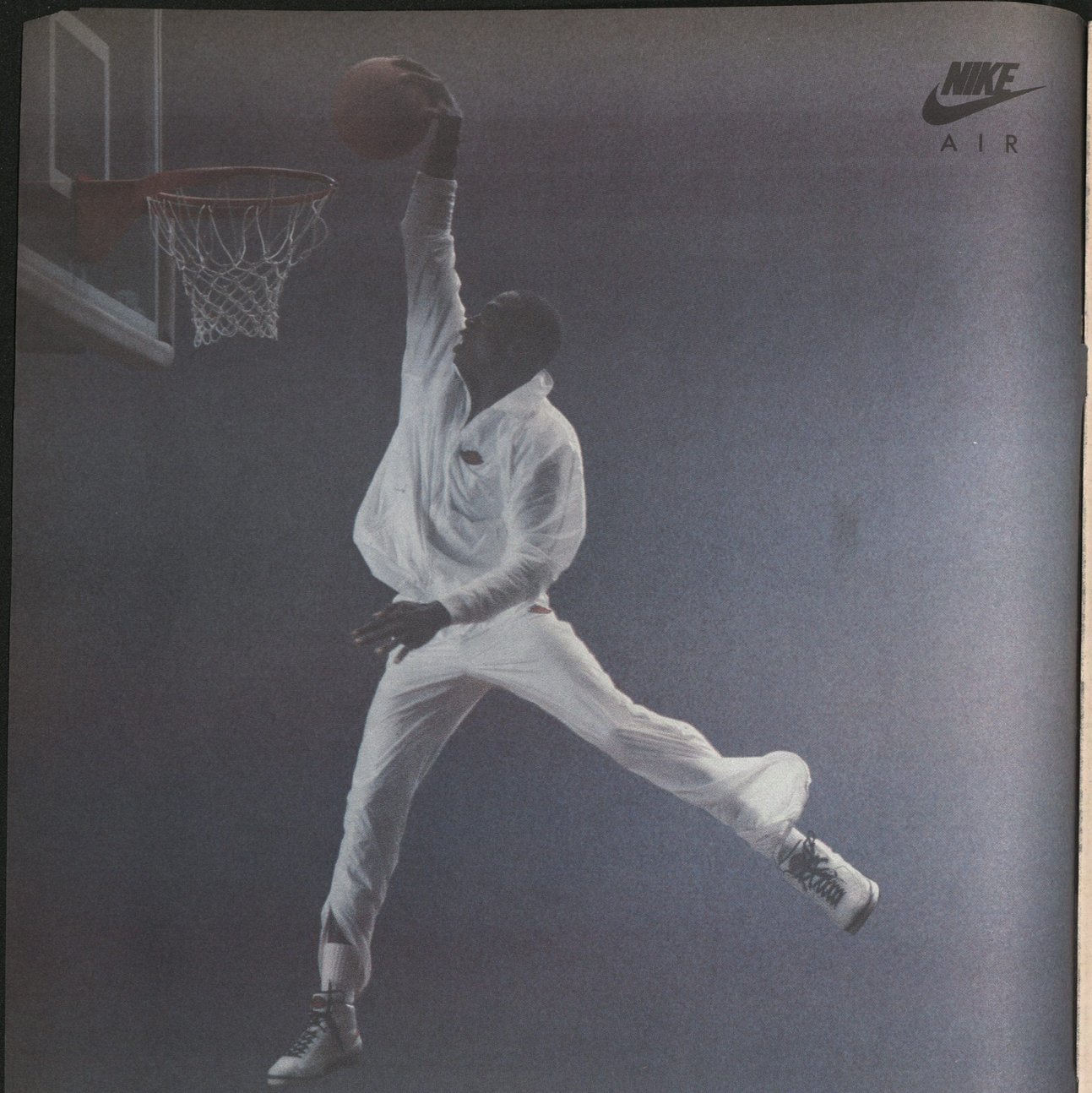
Mid Term Report Card



The new Air Jordan shoe. Available at MICKEY FINN 39 Temple Place, Boston.

April Banquet Honors 1957 Celtics

Dave Cowens co-hosts banquet.

The Boston Celtics and New England Sports Museum today announced plans to co-host a gala 30th anniversary championship celebration honoring the 1957 Celtics, winners of the team's first title. The banquet at the Hotel Sheraton Boston will be on Saturday night, April 11, with all members of the present team joining a host of other Celtics of the past three decades saluting the original champions.

Dave Cowens, president of the New England Sports Museum, explained: "The Celtics have established the most noteworthy history and level of achievement in the annals of team sports. Those who have been a part of that tradition as both players and fans have reason to be proud. The anniversary celebration will serve to honor those who first laid claim to the championship while providing a rally to send the present day Celtics on to a successful defense of their championship."

The banquet will feature a theme of the 1950's, and will include live vocal groups of that era, display rare footage of the Celtics classic double overtime championship victory of April 13, 1957 against the St. Louis Hawks and offer unique auction items, such as playoff road trips with the Celtics.

Tickets can be obtained by calling 78-SPORT. All proceeds will go to help the New England Sports Museum in its first year of operation.

BOSTON CELTICS PRIDE

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VOLUME 2, ISSUE 7
FEBRUARY 2, 1987

Cover . . .

There is no doubt that Dennis Johnson's contributions to this year's Celts have been worth their weight in gold. Dennis' game is one of the few in the NBA that is equally strong at both ends of the court. His conditioning and intelligence keeps his game as trustworthy as money in the bank. Cover photograph by Steve Lipofsky.

Features . . .

4 . . . . . Best and Worst of 1986
A look back at the past year, a year filled with exhilarating victories, new faces, memorable performances and the tragically unexpected.

8 . . . . . Dennis Johnson
Day in and day out, Dennis Johnson performs with the determination, consistency and intelligence typical to all Celtics greats. In his physical and mental attributes, the Celts have found themselves an "Ironman."

10 . . . . . Mid Term Report Cards
As many of us are aware, it's mid-semester at N.B.A. University . . . After a careful look at the student body, writer Tony Cooper dons his cap and gown and passes out the grades.

11 . . . . . Jerry Sichting's New Year's Diary
After a grueling (but completely successful) road trip, Jerry shares his thoughts on travel, the upcoming stretch run and "The Green Team" in this travelogue diary.

17 . . . . . John Havlicek Rates the Small Forwards
Hondo's name is synonymous with success from the Small Forward Position . . . His priorities and thoughts on today's stars are based on the experience of a true champion.

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Best And Worst of 1986

The society known as pro basketball always has its share of ups and downs, and 1986 was certainly no exception. With that in mind, we present you with the best and worst of the recently-concluded year in a variety of categories.

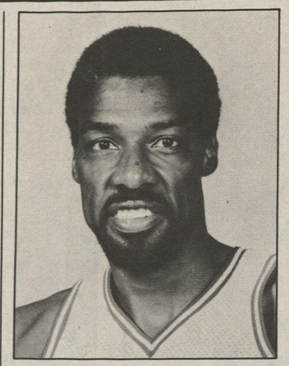
WORST SHOW OF FAITH IN HIS CLUB: New Jersey Net Coach Dave Wohl who said, "We have got to be the dumbest team in the league."

BEST SHOW OF FAITH: Laker guard Magic Johnson: "It's time for us to prove we can come back three or four times. We proved it already. We'll be back."

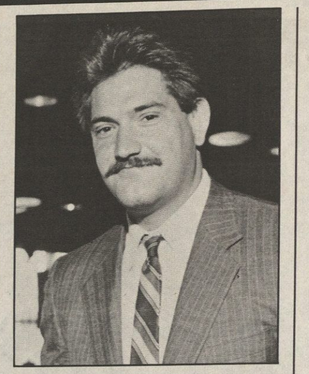
BEST ROOKIE: Cleveland's lanky guard Ron Harper. Unheralded playing at Miami of Ohio, Harper was nevertheless revered by basketball people. He has turned out to be a gem for the Cavaliers.

WORST ROOKIE: New Jersey's Pearl Washington. He's been nothing short of fool's gold for the Nets, one of the reasons why the team has been so horrible. Golden State's Chris Washburn is right up there as well.

WORST SHOW OF RESPECT: Bill Musselman, coach of the CBA Tampa Bay Thrillers and former boss of the Cleveland Cavaliers: "I heard the players talking the other day after practice, saying they could beat the Clippers. I don't know if we could beat them, but I know we could give them a good game."



Best Health: The Good Doctor



Worst Luck: Jeff Ruland

BEST SHOW OF RESPECT: Detroit Piston guard Isiah Thomas on Julius Erving: "I hate now when they compare other players to Julius. To me, it kind of hurts my feelings to have other players compared to Kareem and Julius. They're a special breed, cut from a special cloth, I want them to be them. I don't want anyone else to be Dr. J. whoever you want to be, but don't say you're as good as Dr. J. or Kareem, just say you're good."

BEST ACT OF CORDIALITY: To the player who walked up to Sacramento King center Joe Kleine before a game and said, "Hello satellite dish head."

WORST SHOW OF CORDIALITY: Anything said by Charles Barkley having to do with Boston, the Celtics, Larry Bird, or Johnny Most.

COME UP AWARD: Michael Jordan. He's bounced back from a foot injury to show he is indeed as a good a player as there is in the NBA.

COME DOWN AWARD: Manute Bol. Remember him? He was a folk hero just a few months ago. Now you hardly ever hear his name anymore.

BEST SURPRISE: Utah Jazz, who mean business when it comes to contending for the Midwest Division title.

WORST SURPRISE: The Houston Rockets, who may very well have to battle just to make the playoffs after nearly winning it all a year ago.

WORST MOVE: Give this one to Houston Rocket reserve Richard Anderson. Anderson was on the team bus early when a hotel official followed him to demand he pay his breakfast tab. Anderson got off the bus to pay up, and by the time he came back, he had to pay up again. This time to the Rockets till since he was late for the bus and subsequently fined.

BEST MOVE: Not wishing to repeat answers to the usual questions about his ailing feet, 76er guard Andrew Toney put together an audio tape (complete with background music) which replied to the standard inquiries. The tape ended with "This is not the NFL, so you will not get a replay."

TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A. AWARD: To Warrior Coach George Karl: "I love sellouts," said Karl after a Laker victory at the Oakland Coliseum Arena. "I just wish somebody would grab some of those Lakers fans and choke them. That's annoying. We've got 2,000 or 3,000 people yelling for the Lakers. Why don't they move to L.A." Would Karl prefer those seats to be empty?

BEST FATHER AWARD: Celtic Kevin McHale. On the night his third child (a boy) was born, McHale scored 24 points and grabbed 15 rebounds in a win over the Nets. The next game saw him hit his first eight shots en route to a 34-point performance against the Bullets."

BEST BENCH: Utah Jazz, whose subs averaged 50.1 points a night during one 12-game stretch, while the starters put in 59.7.

WORST BENCH: The Knicks, with the Clippers not too far behind.

BEST SHOOTING: Larry Bird. He heard about a contest in which contestants could win a new car by hitting a midcourt shot, one from the top of the key, one from the free throw line, plus a layup in 25 seconds. He made all four in a row-in 17 seconds.

WORST SHOOTING: The Rockets. Bill Fitch says Richard Anderson is his best three-point thrower. He had made just one of his first nine bombs.

BEST HANDS: The Lakers, who committed just six turnovers. in a win over the Celtics on December 12. Incidentally, that loss snapped a Celtics winning streak at the Garden of 48 straight games.

BEST GAMBLE: The Cavaliers, who took a chance on John Williams, despite his swarthy past at Tulane. Williams is doing a good job for Cleveland.

WORST GAMBLE: Retroactive award to the Portland Trail Blazers for taking the injury-prone Sam Bowie, when they could have had Michael Jordan.

BEST LUCK: (REGARDING HEALTH): To the good Doctor Julius Erving, who has played nearly two decades without a serious injury.

WORST LUCK (REGARDING HEALTH): The Sixers' Jeff Ruland, a truly great, tough player who can't seem to stay out of the infirmary.

WORST TIMING: Walter Berry, who was traded to the Spurs by the Portland Trail Blazers recently, missed the team plane to Detroit and didn't show up until the second quarter.

BEST TIMING: The Warriors, who are looking decent for the first time in years for their new owners.

BEST DRESSED COACH: Yep, it's still Laker Pat Riley, although new Knick Coach Bob Hill is giving him a serious run for his money. Ever see those red suspenders?

WORST DRESSED: Doug Moe (no tie), and Frank Layden. Too close to call. No coincidence that both are from Brooklyn, eh?

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Celtics Experience Gamut of Emotions

1986: The Year In Review

Is there a word used more often in the National Basketball Association than "intensity"? The past year for the Boston Celtics was just that: unprecedented winning streaks, a performance in the playoffs which Danny Ainge recently described as "perfect," the championship in June. There was luck involved—in sports, in any enterprise; it's convenient to assign the misfortune and tragedy which befell the Boston Celtics in 1986 as bad luck.

But there was too much observation and planning involved. Nineteen-eighty six was successful on the floor because the Celtics ran a serious, disciplined training camp, released a misfitted Sly Williams, and jelled as a group after losing a disastrous match with the Knicks on Christmas. Likewise, Larry Bird called Len Bias potentially one of the all-time greats, and Bird missed the 1985 Celtics Rookie Camp, where Red Auerbach and staff saw Bias *electrify* the scrimmages with unerring outside shooting, attentive and physical defense, and repeated dunking, soaring through the humid summer gym air like a special player.

The Celtics are a special organization—it's realized every new year, when matters and lives are re-examined to begin the new year again. The Celtics staff met with Bias in the weeks before the draft (Boston had the 2nd choice in the draft. Jan Volk had engineered this trade eighteen months earlier). The Celtics relied on their sense of Bias—their faith—that he was a Celtics type. Bias had been obviously troubled with drug abuse; in the days before his death he had added continuous stressful traveling and was out of basketball condition, the college season having ended two months earlier.

A new strain of journalism grew twenty years ago around the premise that athletes are not perfect, are not gods. The Celtics family doesn't talk much about the loss of Bias anymore, preferring to go on about their business. Yet, one suspects that the staff intuited Bias was troubled—Red Auerbach is too wise not to have known on some level—but assumed that the positive Celtics environment would help this great player. As much as Bias would have contributed to Boston this season. Intensity reached a sad level for the Celtics this year: a championship season and a death in the family.

January. The Celtics began the year on the final stop of a four-game road trip in Indiana. Behind Dennis Johnson's 29 points and Larry Bird's 13 rebounds, the Celtics defeated the Pacers, 112-104 to push their record to 24-7, leading the Atlantic Division by 4½ games.

The Celtics garnered important wins this month, including a key OT win over Atlanta, 125-122, after trailing by 72-47 late in the first half. It was in the midst of a 13-game winning streak. But it also had Kevin McHale going out of that game with an injured Achilles tendon. He would miss 18 games with the injury.

February. "You might as well all go home. Because I'm gonna win." Larry Bird declared to the rest of the field in the inaugural 3-Point Contest at the All-Star Game in Dallas. Bird then went out and hit his last nine shots in the contest to make his advice stand up. The Celtics later in the month finished 4-3 on an extended West Coast trip; the highlight is a 105-99 win over the Lakers, the 2nd time the C's defeated the NBA champs. Playing power forward with McHale out of the lineup, Bird is named Player of the Month, averaging 30.9 ppg.

The Celtics Family celebrates the triumph.

March. The Celtics are in high gear: Bill Walton is providing superior backup center play, and the individuals on the team play expertly: Bird scores 50 against Dallas, sets a 3-point field goal career record, makes 44 Free Throws consecutively, scores 40 for the 20th time. Robert Parish grabs 25 rebounds against Washington, and K.C. Jones is named Coach of the Month.

April. Team records: Boston wins 28 games in a row at home, setting a one season mark, breaking the 1949-50 Minneapolis Lakers' record. They go on to finish the season with a 50-1 mark. Boston clinches the best record in the league with a 119-98 win over the Knicks in the Garden, and end the regular season with a 135-107 win over New Jersey earning them a 67-15 record. It's the fourth best record in the history of the NBA.

April-June. The Playoffs. Boston rolls through the playoff season, defeating the Bulls, Hawks, and Bucks to win the Eastern Conference title. The opening round o9f the post-season is a roller-coaster three game sweep of Chicago, despite record-setting play by Michael Jordan, who later in 1986 assumed command of the league scoring race. Jordan posts back-to-back scoring games of 50 and 63 in the first two games of the best of five series, but the Celtics win both, 123-104 in Game 1, and 135-131 in double OT in Game 2. Danny Ainge scores 24 points in the 2nd game, all in the final quarter and two overtimes. After sweeping the Bulls, the Celtics take out a strong young Atlanta team, 4-1. Boston wins Game 3 at the Omni after the Hawks' Coach Mike Fratello is honored as Coach of the Year.

Boston clinches the Hawks series with a 24-0 explosion in Game 5, outscoring the Hawks 35-6 in that 3rd period, and winning 132-99.

Boston sweeps the Bucks 4-0 in the Eastern Conference final round, winning the final two games in the Mecca.

Finally, the Celtics realize their ultimate team goal, winning the NBA championship with a 4-2 series victory over the Houston Rockets and former Coach Bill Fitch. Robert Parish plunges both Ralph Sampson and Akeem Olajuwon into foul trouble in leading the team to the 1st Game 112-100 win and Larry Bird dominates Game 2 with 31 in the 117-95 win. Houston sweeps past the C's in the latter stages of Game 3, 106-104, setting up a team effort-style win in Game 4 at The Summit. Bird and Johnson hit key shots, Parish and McHale play strong inside, and Walton saves it with a dunk. After a 5th Game loss, highlighted by a fight between Jerry Sichting and Ralph Sampson, Boston wins Game 6 at the Garden, 114-97.

"After losing the fifth game," Bird says later, "we knew we would come in here and play a complete 48 minutes."

Bird is named Most Valuable Player of both the regular season and the Playoffs. He averages 25.9 ppg, 9.3 rpg, and 8.2 assists in the playoffs.

The City of Boston hosts a parade for the team, its 16th championship.

June. The Celtics, with the second choice in the draft, select Bias. He comes to Boston on the end of a three day trip which had him in Oakland, Washington, New York, and then Boston. He's visibly tired as he meets the press in Boston. The following day he signs a prospective contract with Reebok which would earn him close to $1 million. Two days after he is drafted, he dies of a drug overdose. His death, according to some, sets back the franchise five years in planning and manpower.

"Nothing will ever surprise me again," says a saddened Auerbach.

August. Celtics hold rookie camp at Brandeis, the first time they have a camp at that school. Fred Roberts plays impressively at the camp—in exile from the Jazz. Other Celtics at the camp include Rick Carlisle, David Thirdkill, Sam Vincent, and Greg Kite. Roberts is later acquired from the Jazz; in exchange for a draft choice and the agreement for the two teams to play a later Pre-Season game.

September. A new season. Bill Walton, off of his best season in some ways as a pro, breaks his finger in a pre-camp scrimmage. Later, he injures his ankle working out informally. "This," moans Ray Melchiorre, "from Bill, who would tape up his ankles even for a shoot-around." Walton is lost to the team indefinitely after he undergoes ankle surgery in December.

October. The Celtics raise their 16th championship banner before their season opener against Washington (with Moses Malone, acquired from the 76ers). Boston opens the season with Danny Ainge on the injured list after the guard fractures the transverse process areas around his vertebrae. Boston wins the opener, 120-102 behind Johnson's 23 and Parish's 11 rebounds.

November. Celtics defeat the Bucks, 124-116 despite Bird's ejection and then move into 1st place in the Atlantic Division with back-to-back wins in Chicago and Detroit. Bird scores 37 in Chicago, Jordan, 48.

December. Celtics end the year the way they began it—on a 4-game winning streak after sweeping their first 1986-87 West Coast swing. The home and Boston Garden winning streaks are ended, however; in Hartford, Moses Malone leads the Bullets over the Celtics and in Boston, Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar lead the Lakers to victory. Bird and some excellent play from the Green Team key the season's last win, a 104-102 verdict in Seattle.

Innerview

Bob Cousy

Thoughts About the New League

After a thirteen year career with the Celtics, which culminated in a career scoring average of 18.5 ppg and over 7 assists per game, Bob Cousy continued to excel at many opportunities afforded him after his playing days were over. His current position as the Celtics broadcaster for WLVI Television is one such area benefiting from his expertise and credibility. Most recently, Bob was asked to represent a fledgling new basketball league with an interesting approach to the game. As of this writing, Bob's official participation has not been established, other than that his association with the league will in no way be considered as a full-time job, he has agreed to consider representing the IBL (International Basketball League) in the capacity of a part-time spokesman. Celtics Pride was able to speak with Bob concerning some of the more interesting aspects of basketball the IBL is presenting.

CELTICS PRIDE: What is the current status of the IBL?
COUSY: The league has announced its intention of proceeding with formation, but at this point it hasn't quite materialized yet.

CELTICS PRIDE: One of the league rules, and it is quite interesting, that being a restriction on the player's height (6'4' and under). How did the idea for the league evolve?
COUSY: Well, a number of people have been working on it for about a year and a half. The initiator and coordinator is Dennis Murphy, who's from California, and whose credentials include being the driving force behind the old ABA as well as the World Hockey Association. He's the one who basically put these two leagues together and some of his friends approached him with this concept and at that point he began formulation. He recently got in touch with me to act as a sort of spokesman for this concept.

CELTICS PRIDE: From what we understand, this would truly be an international league, with other countries participating. What countries have expressed an interest to date?

COUSY: Well, we have a firm commitment from the Phillipines, and interest has been generated in Italy and Spain, and the concept does have international implications and that may very well be where the potential lies.

CELTICS PRIDE: Will this be a summer league?
COUSY: Yes, depending on what countries are involved, it's designed to play its season over the summer. The league does not want to appear nor generate the idea that it's in competition with the NBA, but rather as working with the NBA for they would also like to avail themselves of the large indoor arenas. Taking these ideas into consideration, playing in June through September seems to make most sense.

CELTICS PRIDE: What changes in the actual game will be apparent?
COUSY: The selling point of the league comes from a feeling that there's a large constituency out there, who when watching a team 6'4" and under play will see more ball movement, a strong passing emphasis. It's of course exciting to see a Spud Webb dunk a ball on a fast break, but there can also be a facet of the NBA game with its emphasis on height to make the scoring of a basket seem like the easiest part of the game. The IBL will appeal to the kind of fan who misses or would like to see again the kind of game that I used to play. If it's marketed properly, I think the idea is interesting and would develop a following. Whether the following is sufficient enough to support the teams is of course yet to be seen.

CELTICS PRIDE: Would the IBL be interested in cultivating a relationship with the NBA that's similar to the one enjoyed by the CBA?
COUSY: I guess that has to be worked out. I think another contributing factor to the height rule is to minimize any potential confrontation with the NBA. On the other hand, they are prepared to make a much more serious financial commitment than the CBA. The projected salary cap for each IBL team is 600,000, I'm not sure, but I don't think the CBAs' is even close. The point is, they want to sell the league as a major league product which I think is intelligent. I don't think any project starting as a minor league product has a chance at succeeding, sports fans don't seem as excited with minor leagues. This seems to generally be the case with the exception of selective markets. If this philosophy is viable, then the IBL can serve in as important a role as the European League or CBA in benefiting the NBA. An IBL which is viable could be a structure for NBA teams to place players in need of seasoning, an environment where they could be watched over, and with the idea of their participating in the NBA eventually.

CELTICS PRIDE: There's also a good number of athletes available.
COUSY: There sure is. I don't think talent will be a problem at all.

CELTICS PRIDE: Has a commissioner been chosen?
COUSY: Actually, titles haven't been handed out yet, but I think they're planning on hiring an Executive Director who will share the running of the league with a five-man management committee administrating the league with the cooperation of team owners.

CELTICS PRIDE: Has there been interest expressed in broadcasting games by the television media?
COUSY: Well, I haven't been involved in that part of it, but I have heard that talks have occurred with two cable stations in this regard. The appeal of reaching an overseas market has created some interest also.

CELTICS PRIDE: Will there be a three point shot in the IBL?
COUSY: That's still under discussion. They've asked me about it, and I told them that it probably won't make that much of a difference. If left up to me I wouldn't have one, but I think too much has been made of it and I don't think it affects the game that much one way or the other.

CELTICS PRIDE: When can we expect further information concerning the league's future?
COUSY: The next league meetings will be in Los Angeles on the weekend of February 1st, at which point these questions will become more viable, or academic. It will be at this meeting where potential team owners will follow up their verbal agreements with financial commitments. It's my understanding that the league will leave that meeting with either eight or twelve teams.

CELTICS PRIDE: What cities are closest to landing a franchise?
COUSY: Well, there's probably going to be one in Northern California. They're not exactly sure where yet, but my feeling is possibly Fresno: there will be two in Southern California in Los Angeles and Orange County. We have one in Chicago, New York, New Jersey, Boston, Winnipeg, Vancouver and, interestingly, Anchorage, Alaska.

Announcing . . .

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Photograph the Celtics From Courtside!

Introducing the KODAK/CELTICS PRIDE photo contest through which you can be the lucky winner of a sideline pass to photograph a Celtics game.

Five (5) lucky photographers will receive the exciting opportunity to sit courtside and photograph the World Champions in action.

All you have to do is send us your best sports-oriented photograph and you could be a winner. (See entry rules below).

In addition, the following attractive prizes will be made available to first place finishers:

- **a new Kodak K12 35 mm camera**
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- **"Season of the Shooting Stars," the 1986 Boston Celtics Video Yearbook**
- **a complimentary year-long subscription to *CELTICS PRIDE***
- **Kodak 35 mm film**

Second and third place finishers will receive:

- **a personally autographed 20" x 30" color photo enlargement of your favorite Celtic**
- **"Season of the Shooting Stars," the 1986 Boston Celtics Video Yearbook**
- **a complimentary year-long subscription to *CELTICS PRIDE***
- **Kodak 35mm film**

Entry Rules

1. The contest is open to amateur photographers only.
2. Black-and-white or color photographs are eligible.
3. Prints of any size and slides will be accepted.
4. Photographs must have a sports-oriented theme. They do not have to be basketball related. (Family sporting acitivities will be eligible.)
5. Any number of photographs may be entered. Contestants name, address and phone number must be written clearly in ink on the back of each print and/or accompanied with each slide. Mail or bring your entries to:

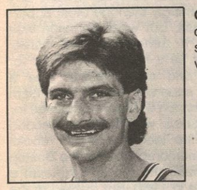
KODAK/CELTICS PRIDE PHOTO CONTEST
Boston Celtics Offices
150 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02114

6. Entries will not be returned but may be picked up at the above address after April 15, 1987. All unclaimed entries will not be retained.
7. All entries must be submitted no later than April 2, 1987. A total of 5 first place finishers, 5 second place finishers and 5 third place finishers will be chosen beginning February 5, 1987. Winners will be chosen every two weeks thereafter. For first place finishers, *CELTICS PRIDE* and Kodak will not be responsible for transportation to and from the game to be photographed.

The Celtics Perspective

Is Play in the NBA More Physical This Season?

Immediately before the Celtics left on their western road trip, Greg Kite and Rick Carlisle were involved in fights—Carlisle on December 17 against John Long of the Indiana Pacers, and Kite against Patrick Ewing the previous night when the Celtics upended the Knicks. On other occasions, the Celtics were involved in very physical games, especially on the road against Atlanta and Detroit. The Celtics were asked recently to offer an opinion on whether play in the NBA has been more physical this season.


Greg Kite

GREG KITE. I can't see anything that indicates a difference. The game has historically been a physical sport, and I don't think there was much change from the way the game was played twenty years ago.

K.C. Jones

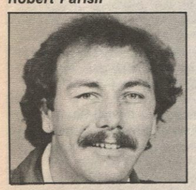
K.C. JONES. I think so. There must be a good reason although I wouldn't try to read the minds of any league officials. I think it's been more physical since Day One of the season. Allowing more pushing, shoving—which is unsportsmanlike.

Jan Volk

JAN VOLK. I don't think it's been any more physical than in past years. Our coaches may think so, but I believe the game is essentially unchanged to this point of the year.

Robert Parish

ROBERT PARISH. I would say so; I would even suggest coming to our practices to have that verified. Players are more aggressive this year but I don't want to say anything more. You might foul out of the next game if too much is said.


Chris Ford

CHRIS FORD. No. I thought the game was more physical when I played. But the whole issue leads to sensationalism, anyway.

Sam Vincent

SAM VINCENT. In the time I've been here, for two seasons, I don't see much change. The better teams are the aggressive teams, and the game is a contact sport.

Jerry Sichting

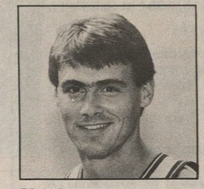
JERRY SICHTING. It's always been physical. I don't think it's been any *less* physical, but I think the fights are overplayed. Veterans from 6-7 years before I played professionally—in the ABA, too—insisted the game was much more physical in the past. They'd have fights every night.

Jimmy Rodgers

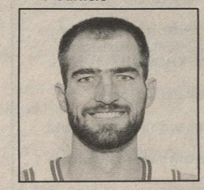
JIMMY RODGERS. I would say so. Throughout the NBA. Any time there is more parity in the league there is more likelihood of fighting. In the Eastern Conference, especially, the physical game is more pronounced. The better the teams, the more likellhood there will be fighting.

Darren Daye

DARREN DAYE. There have been fights every year. I think the Celtics may be in more fights because they have been more successful than other teams.


Rick Carlisle

RICK CARLISLE. I think the Celtics may be in more fights because we are the defending champs and are undermanned right now. I think other teams are trying to wear us out physically.


Fred Roberts

FRED ROBERTS. I think the game is considerably more physical for me this season. I'm playing a lot more power forward, where in the past, I was a small forward. Also, this is my first experience in the Eastern Conference and I think over here the games are more physical than in the Western Conference.

Dennis Johnson
"Blue Chip" Performer

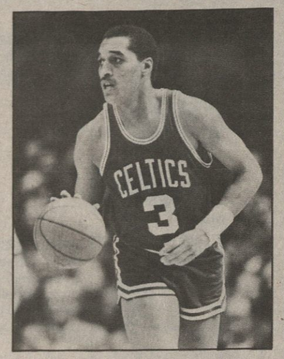
By Bob Schron

Dennis Johnson would play with the pros when he was still in school at Pepperdine in the mid-seventies. His speed was outstanding, his defense sophisticated, and his jumping ability unmatched. His two biggest boosters earlier in his career were Jerry West, the Hall of Famer who was then coaching the Los Angeles Lakers, and Bill Russell, another Hall of Famer, who was at that time the coach of the Seattle SuperSonics. The early years for Dennis Johnson were a combination of talent, success, emotion, trial and error, and some doubt. The latter was overcome through the power of maturity.

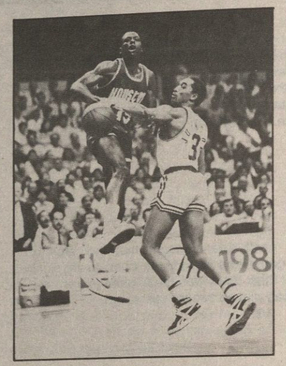
Dennis Johnson (commonly known to teammates, media, and fans as DJ), signed a long-term contract with the Celtics last September after briefly courting the idea of free agency with the slowly emerging Indiana franchise. The 6-4, 200-pound, 32-year old Guard has accomplished it all in his pro career: Playoff Most Valuable Player in 1979, All-NBA First Team in 1981, All-NBA Defensive Team, 1st and 2nd Teams eight straight years, three NBA team championships. As West and Russell were early supporters before the guard became recognized, his highest advocate now is Larry Bird.

"Magic Johnson and Dennis Johnson are the best guards in the league," Bird said early last month.

After Bird and Magic Johnson teamed up in a benefit contest last summer, Bird adamantly repeated his vote for D. Johnson. Asked if Magic was the best player he'd performed with, Bird responded, "Nope. DJ is."



Dennis responds to every challenge.



K.C. calls D.J. "An amazing player."

And the ingredients for stardom existed back in the college days and early professional years. West wanted to draft Johnson after Dennis declared hardship in time for the 1976 draft (after two years at Los Angeles Harbor Junior College and a year at Pepperdine, where he led the Waves to the WAC championship over Bill Cartwright and the University of San Francisco). But the Sonics took Johnson with the 29th pick in the whole draft, and Johnson's road to animated stardom began.

After a rookie year when he appeared in 81 games but with only enough minutes to average 9.2 ppg, Johnson's career began ascending. Lenny Wilkens took over as coach the following (1977-78) season with the Sonics floundering at 5-17 in late November. He restructured the starting lineup: Johnson was now starting, along with Gus Williams, Jack Sikma, Marvin Webster, and Lonnie Shelton. With the exception of Webster, this was the team which won the NBA championship a season later, after pressing the Bullets to 7 games in 1977-78. Dennis Johnson was the heart of that team; he defended then-stars like Bobby Dandridge and David Thompson, he jumped well, like an airplane (a nickname early on), he had an explosive first step to the basket, and had tremendous speed. He was the MVP of the 1979 championship series.

The Sonics are almost a buried memory now—last week in Seattle, for example, when the Celts slipped by a new Seattle version, 104-102, Johnson wasn't any different seemingly than the other superstars who visit. But when Johnson was ending—as it turned out—his career there, it was as a fiery youth, eager for recognition and compensation due a player with superstar talents and team instincts. Johnson won several games for the SuperSonics with the final second jumpers in the team's effort to repeat, including a memorable one in the Boston Garden to hand the rookie Bird-team a critical defeat in 1980. But instead of the pure joy he had when he was a younger player, the game was more complicated now, a profession, a colder business.

"I used to tell Dennis that it was not worth it to wear himself out," said Paul Silas, a former teammate on that Sonic team. "But he was younger then and he let things affect him more." After the Sonics were eliminated by the Los Angeles Lakers in the playoffs, Johnson was traded to Phoenix.

Ironically, Johnson came to some strong conclusions on a jet to Phoenix. "Everything changed for me on that plane ride to Phoenix," DJ recalled. "I remember thinking that I had to take a totally professional attitude toward the game. And at the same time, enjoy it more."

•••

"If we get Dennis Johnson, we'll have a legitimate chance to win the championship."—Red Auerbach, 1983.

Johnson immediately sparked the Suns to success, earning All-Pro honors in 1981 and taking them to the Pacific Division championship over the Lakers (the Suns' 57-25 record was the third best in the league that season and the best in the franchise's history). In the Valley of the Sun, Johnson continued to grow, on and off the floor, if the situation was less than ideal on the basketball floor. In 1981, he and Donna Johnson had son Dwayne, and at the time, the 26-year old Johnson said, "Basketball was the best thing that ever happened to me, but the baby is the greatest thing that ever happened to me. Having him is a joy. He's unexplainable." The Johnsons grew to love Phoenix and are contemplating purchasing a home there in 1987.

But DJ and Phoenix Coach John MacLeod grew apart. The Suns lost the the Kansas City Kings in Johnson's first season and an experiment with Walter Davis at guard didn't completely work. "John (MacLeod) refined my game," states Johnson in Boston. "I perfected my postups, making certain moves down low. I pushed the ball up the floor consistently (Williams had done this in Seattle), I read defenses better. But I'm not certain John had a sensitivity to his players. I'm not sure our practices weren't much too long sometimes.

"That was the best thing about Boston. There was an immediate feeling of acceptance here. A positive phone call from K.C. after the trade to Boston. The idea of playing with a team that had Larry, Robert Parish, and Kevin McHale. I happily play it low-key: we get recognition when we win. My teammates are the main people I have to please. Coaches and players (here) think alike."

•••

"Playing with Dennis Johnson is like playing wth a jewel."—M.L. Carr, 1985

"I never realized how good Dennis was playing against him," said Larry Bird in 1985. "But after three weeks in training camp, I began seeing what a great player he is." The beat of Johnson's drum in Boston has been persistent, enduring, and classic. In 1983-84, he immediately took over leadership on a team which started a young Gerald Henderson with him, and had Danny Ainge off the bench. He led the team, calling offensive and defensive signals for these guards. He was the critical difference in the 7-game playoff series win over the Knicks, playing Game 7 with a separated shoulder and scoring the opening critical points of that game. He stopped Magic Johnson in the Finals, and sparked that 7th game win, that time with a fractured hand.

In the following year, he perhaps played even better. He was the defensive stopper in playoff series against World Free (Cleveland), Isiah Thomas (Detroit), and Andrew Toney (Philadelphia). The Celts would finally burn out against the Lakers that year, but not before Johnson's memorable back-to-back efforts in Los Angeles: 27-points-12 assists and the game-winner in a 107-105 win, and a 17-assist performance the next contest, which the Celtics lost. In review, last season when the Celtics swept to the crown again, Johnson was the critical difference individually in twelve wins. "That's being conservative," admonishes K.C. Jones. "Dennis is our stabilizer. Plays all the tough defensive assignments, plays point guard, and takes responsibility for the team. You can't ask anything more.

"And this season he's forced to do even more with people out. He has to lead the team, play more minutes, yet find a way to conserve his strength, too. He's an amazing player."

This season, a difficult one for Johnson, his play has remained at a very high level. He set a regular season career high in assists (14) in a memorable December shootout with Magic Johnson. His 27 points and 12 assists keyed a critical win over the 76ers in an important early meeting. Last week, he scored the game-deciding points against the Clippers, shot 9-11 versus the Kings, and again took over leadership in the backcourt in the Seattle victory as the Celtics closed out a 4-0 roadswing.

For Dennis Johnson, it's a money-player career come full circle. "When I was in Seattle, success just came, it happened—we were never picked to go anywhere. As a veteran, you know you have a few more good years left and you have to set an example. For me right now, that means involving everybody in the game and hopefully enjoying more success.

"When I finish my career, I want people to say these things: Not that Dennis Johnson was a great player, or that he was a pleasant player. But that, when he was on the court, good or bad, he went out to play and he played hard.

Self-Portrait

DENNIS JOHNSON

BIRTHDATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: September 18, 1954 at San Pedro, California
OCCUPATION: Point Guard, The Boston Celtics
GOALS IN BASKETBALL: To repeat this season To play productively until I'm 35-37, even if it means coming off the bench later in my career.
GOALS AFTER BASKETBALL: Investment; also, some type of activity related to community work and/or counseling.
FAVORITE PERFORMERS: Eddie Murphy, Richard Pryor, Luther Vandross, Stephanie Mills
IDEAL EVENING: A night out with friends, a concert, show, or dinner. Or spending the night with my family.
IF I COULD GO BACK IN TIME, WHAT YEAR WOULD IT BE AND WHY: A time when I would be able to see the development of the west, e.g., California.
I HOPE I NEVER HAVE TO: Move my place of residence, my home, again. Our last move here in Boston was far more complicated than I expected.
PEOPLE WHO KNEW ME IN HIGH SCHOOL THOUGHT I WAS: Responsible.
BEST TIME: Winning team championships in Seattle and in Boston.
WORST TIME: Going through contract hassles.
IDEAL FANTASY: Being able to create humor for an audience, subtle and sometimes outrageous, as Bill Cosby might do.
FAVORITE FOOD: Seafood and meals which are presented with special care for you as a diner.
MOST IRRATIONAL FEAR: Some animals.
IF I WERE GOING TO THE MOON, I'D TAKE: My family.

Speaking of Dennis Johnson

Bob Ryan in 1979, the week after the SuperSonics won the championship and Johnson won the playoff MVP: "The first hurdle to the Sonics' repeating chances will be Dennis Johnson's contract. The brilliant young guard, who has another year on his contract, is making renegotiation noises. The three-year veteran is ready to cash in on his growing reputation. Can the Sonics afford him? And if they can, will he be the same player after moving into a high tax bracket?

Jerry Colangelo, General Manager of the Phoenix Suns, speaking of Johnson after the Suns acquired Johnson in exchange for Paul Westphal before the 1980-81 season: "He's really changed the personality of the team. He's a competitor, and his aggressiveness has rubbed off on the team. His toughness has made the ball club mentally tougher."

Larry Bird on the Dennis Johnson-Michael Jordan matchup: "It's the best against the best. No guard does the things he can do for his team offensively and no guard can do what DJ does for us to stop a guy as good as Jordan."

Michael Jordan on Johnson: "DJ is one of the toughest I go against. He's seen a lot of offensive players and knows what to expect. After he sees you one time, he adjusts. The key thing is that when he adjusts to you, you have to adjust to him."

Bird on Johnson: "Dennis is the best guard I've ever played with. He makes his teammates better players."

K.C. Jones on Johnson, 1986: "He plays great defense, he's got a great sense of determination, he's a strong, strong player. He point guards for us, and he gives us some offense. You don't see many guards who can do that many things."

Magic Johnson, Lakers superstar Guard: "Dennis Johnson is a helluva basketball player. I respect him. I know Pat Riley respects him. There isn't a player in this dressing room who doesn't respect him. He doesn't get the respect from a lot of basketball people he ought to get."

K.C. Jones: "Teams that have had D.J. on them have won world championships. That speaks louder for the man than any of his peers have to."

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Mid-Term Report Cards to the NBA

The 1986-87 NBA season is virtually half over, so it's time for mid-terms. Let's take a look at what kind of grades the other 22 teams in the league have achieved up to this point.

Atlanta Hawks: The Hawks have proven they are indeed for real and belong among the NBA's elite teams. This is a team with no serious weaknesses, and Coach Mike Fratello should be in the business a long time. About the only question mark the Hawks have is how well they will react to the injury of sparkplug Spud Webb.

If there is a team in the Eastern Conference that is a threat to thwart the Celtics' bid to repeat as champions, the Hawks may very will be it. **GRADE: A**

Philadelphia 76ers: With Moses Malone gone and Andrew Toney incognito, garrulous Charles Barkley is now the centerpiece of Matt Guokas' squad. Tim McCormick is doing a decent job at center, but Jeff Ruland's injuries have done great damage to the Sixers' Atlantic Division title aspirations. Certainly, the Sixers aren't a bad team, but they are nowhere near the powerhouse of old.

Regardless of how one feels about Barkley, you have got to wish the 76ers well, simply because this is Julius Erving's final season in the NBA. **GRADE: C+**

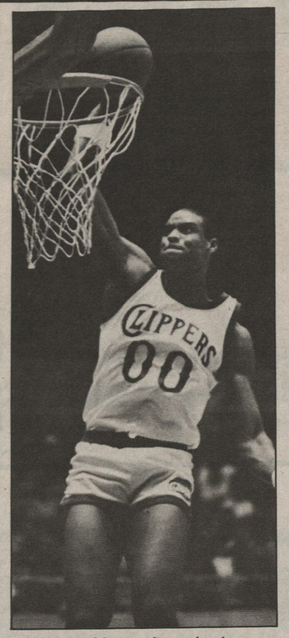
Washington Bullets: The Bullets have been playing at the level they've managed to maintain for the past several years—average. Not even the presence of Moses Malone has made the Bullets appreciably better, although it could be a case where it takes them a while to gel. Look for the Bullets to be no better than a break-even club by the time all is said and done. **GRADE: C-**

New York Knicks: Hubie Brown is out and the nattily-attired Bob Hill is in as head coach, and the Knicks are still having a multitude of problems. It doesn't appear as if Bernard King will play at all this season and Kenny Walker hasn't made much of an impact. The Knicks consist of Patrick Ewing and a bunch of guys nobody's ever heard of—or would want on their team. **GRADE: D**

New Jersey Nets: Ugh! The scene in New Jersey has been nothing short of a disaster. Alleged hot-shot rookie Pearl Washington has been a bust, and Coach Dave Wohl has seriously considered quitting.

"Maybe it's time for me to make a decision that they'd be better off with another coach," Wohl said. "I'm not reaching them."

Obviously not, considering that the Nets had lost 20 of their first 28 games. Then again, Wohl's communication skills couldn't have deteriorated that much in one season, right? Clearly, the players just aren't doing the job. **GRADE: F**



Benoit should stay after school.

Detroit Pistons: Despite rumors of dissension in Motown, centered upon Adrian Dantley's alleged unhappiness, the Pistons have given a more than respectable showing in the Central Division and are most decidedly a contender. Coach Chuck Daly has apparently done a good job of handling a delicate situation—he just hopes the whole thing doesn't explode in his face. By the way, Dantley's existence hasn't been all bad in Detroit—he's leading the team in scoring. **GRADE: B+**

Milwaukee Bucks: In Milwaukee, they're hoping that the acquisition of center Jack Sikma will prove to be the final piece of what will be a championship team. That may or may not be the case, but ex-Celtic Don Nelson has the Bucks playing crisply as usual. Isn't it amazing how the man gets it done with a roster that, at least on paper, doesn't look all that impressive? Sidney Moncrief has spent much of the season hurting, but the Bucks are nevertheless a team that has to be reckoned with in this league. **GRADE: A**

Chicago Bulls: They should call this squad Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls instead. The Bulls would have a record rivaling that of the Knicks or Nets without Jordan. With him, they are a tough team to beat every night. Thanks to the brilliant Jordan, the Bulls have become a major gate attraction, drawing huge crowds in every town, including Chicago. Oh, and did you think these people lay down their bucks to see Elston Turner?

Rookie Coach Doug Collins had to suspend first year frontcourter Brad Sellers for missing a team flight, so Collins has shown a willingness to lay down the lumber on those who break the law. **GRADE: B**

Indiana Pacers: Now here's a team with an impressive array of young players that has somehow never been able to get it done. But under Jack Ramsay, the Pacers are at least hovering at the 500 mark. It may take a supreme second-half push, but the Pacers have to be considered playoff contenders. **GRADE: B**

Cleveland Cavaliers: Rookies Brad Daugherty, Ron Harper, John Williams and Mark Price have brought respectable roundball back to Richfield, and Coach Lenny Wilkens and general manager Wayne Embry have shown they know what they're doing. Most interesting about these four freshmen is they're not just taking up roster space, but all are making big contributions. Williams has sloughed off his problems at Tulane to become what everyone thought he'd be—a sound NBA player. Harper has been nothing short of sensational.

The Cavs may come up short in the playoff hunt this year, but they are a squad that will be heard from in the future. Everyone in the NBA takes them seriously. **GRADE: B+**

Dallas Mavericks: So maybe the Mavs don't need a center to replace James Donaldson after all? Derek Harper has taken over for Brad Davis at first line point guard, and the Dallas offense hasn't missed a beat. Detlef Schrempf looks like he's going to be a good one—Mark Aguirre has had that status for quite some time. The fall of the Nuggets has given Dick Motta's Mavericks a clear shot at the Midwest Division title. **GRADE: B+**

Denver Nuggets: Injuries have wrecked the Nuggets front court, which has seen guard Bill Hanzlik forced into the role of center. Sure, Hanzlik is giving his all, but he's naturally no Bill Russell. The Nuggets have realized just how important Calvin Natt (out with a bad knee) is to them. Top pick Maurice Martin hasn't done a whole lot. You can be sure he's been the brunt of more than two Doug Moe tirades this year. **GRADE: D**

Utah Jazz: A Midwest Division champion in Salt Lake? It's no Frank Layden joke, folks. It could very well happen. The Jazz have been the surprise of the NBA, proving that the Adrian Dantley swap (with Detroit for Kelly Tripucks and Kent Benson) was indeed a good move for them.

Karl (The Mailman) Malone has been delivering for Utah from day one and is getting better. Darrell Griffith's return has helped the Jazz immensely as well. Another fact worth noting is John Stockton has turned into a big league point guard.

The Jazz would like to think they have the best bunch in the NBA, and they could very well be right. This is a good team. **GRADE: A**

Houston Rockets: The squad that once threatened to send the playoffs home from the championship series without any jewelry may not even make the playoffs. For a while, Bill Fitch was even on thin ice.

Akeem Olajuwon recently signed a rich extension to his contract, which angered Ralph Sampson, who is slated to be a free-agent at season's end. Don't be surprised to see Sampson in another uniform next season. **GRADE: F**

Sacramento Kings: This year, the Kings are eminently beatable even at home, where 10,333 screaming fanatics pack Arco Arena every night. Top pick Harold Pressley has been a disappointment, as has the entire Kings club. Based on their play last year, it looked like the Kings were on the road to improvement and would challenge for a playoff spot. That won't happen this year, barring a miracle turnaround. **GRADE: F**

San Antonio Spurs: The Spurs are awful, no question about that. Crowds at Hemisfair Arena are about half what they used to be a few years ago, and basketball is no longer one big party in the Alamo anymore. Bob Weiss may wish he were still an assistant in Dallas.

About the only good news around these parts is Johnny Moore is making a recovery, albeit a slow one, from desert fever. Best of luck to him. **GRADE: D+**

Los Angeles Lakers: The Lakers are in first place, Pat Riley is still looking like Mr. GQ, Karem's sky hooks and hair are falling, Magic is wheeling and dealing. In short, everything is status quo in LA Land. Good news for the Lakers, bad news for everyone else in the league.

There has been talk about the demise of the Lakers. Well, any team would have to love a demise of 22-6, the Lakers record after their first 28 games. **GRADE: A**

Portland Trail Blazers: The Blazers have held up amazingly well in the face of losing center Sam Bowie to a leg injury early in the year. Remember, the Blazers also have a new coach in Mike Schuler.

Kiki Vandeweghe is having one of his best seasons as a pro, and has been doing much of Portland's frontcourt scoring. If the Blazers can keep up this caliber of play, Schuler will be an easy coach of the year winner. **GRADE: A**

Golden State: George Karl has come from Cleveland to turn the Warriors from a farce to a team that could make the playoffs for the first time in about a decade. Sleepy Floyd has been wide awake all season and has been playing as well as any point guard in the NBA.

The biggest change in Oakland has been the play and attitude of Joe Barry Carrol. The guy actually comes to the arena and plays as if he wants to be on the floor, a marked improvement from his lackluster and lackadaisical past.

The Warriors have been hurt by the loss of shooter supreme Purvis Short, but Karl hasn't allowed that to cause Golden State to slide. Karl has also used top draftee Chris Washburn (wont to missing practices, busses, you name it) as an example that he's the boss and won't tolerate any funny stuff.

The sad thing is if Washburn had has head taped on correctly, the Warriors would be near the top of the division. His talent is unquestioned. **GRADE: B+**

Seattle SuperSonics: Second-year boss Bernie Bickerstaff waited a long time for his first NBA head coaching job and is making the most out of it. The Sonics, who are committed to a youth movement, have been surprisingly competitive. The scoring of Tom Chambers has been a big factor in Seattle's respectable showing. Jack Sikma hasn't been missed at all. **GRADE: B+**

Phoenix Suns: Don't look for much from the Suns this year, who probably won't even make the playoffs this season. In all fairness to John MacLeod, he has the Suns playing about as well as they can. But that doesn't cut it in the rugged Pacific Division. **GRADE: C-**

Los Angeles Clippers: Pity poor Coach Don Chaney. The former Celtic is one of the classiest guys around, but he is saddled with a team and organization that is awful on its best day. Chaney has cracked the whip on center Benoit Benjamin several times in an effort to make him live up to his potential, but it hasn't worked. Could it be that Benjamin isn't as good as everyone thought? Of course, it could also be that he just doesn't give a damn. Benjamin may yet cost Chaney his job. **GRADE: F**

Celtics Diary

Jerry Sichting's Finest Year

When Danny Ainge went down with a back injury in the Celtics' 4th Pre-Season game this season, K.C. Jones was forced to change his lineup, and one of his most important choices was how to play Jerry Sichting, the 7-year veteran who was acquired from Indiana in 1985 and who then played such an important role in last year's title run.

Through the first five games of the regular season, K.C. started Sam Vincent. "We prefer to have Jerry coming off the bench," Jones stated at that time. "He gives us a much needed lift off the bench."

But it soon changed; without Ainge, the Celtics needed more production from their guards. They started Sichting: "We found that Jerry was only getting 4 or 5 shots a game, and we need more from him."

Despite sickness this season, Sichting is probably having his best season in the NBA. Included are season highs of 45 minutes at Chicago, 20 points (on 9 of 10 shooting) against Atlanta, and his Celtic high of 9 assists at Chicago. Sichting is a genuine, realistic young man, who lowkeys it off the floor and plays with great intensity on it. As the team headed to the West Coast last week, he recorded his thoughts for *Celtics Pride*.

Christmas. We had a good holiday, by NBA standards. After playing in Milwaukee last Saturday, we were able to be in Boston for four days. We spent the holiday together (our family, my wife Joni and two children, Jarad [3] and Jason [1½]) and flew out to Phoenix Christmas Night, not too bad because most people aren't traveling on Christmas. We arrived at 11 p.m. in Phoenix and I turned in early.

December 26. Phoenix. We got off to a good start tonight against Phoenix, scoring 40, and played better defense than we had for quite awhile, winning the game pretty comfortably.

The guys on the team aren't comparing this year to last season. Last year we had as smooth a road as a team could hope for in an NBA season. We weren't injured much and we continued to improve each game. We all knew this year would be harder and the injuries we've had to Bill (Walton) and Scotty (Wedman) have made things tougher. The key for our team is to continue improving as a team; if we lose, make the necessary adjustments. Our defense, for example, has not been that bad this year. Where we've been hurt is on the other team's offensive board. It may not be only the inside players' fault. Guards have to go in there and pick up loose balls, too.

Larry Bird likes to go out early and shoot on his own. Tonight, pre-game, he left our locker room and walked through the door to the gym. But it was the wrong door—he walked right into the Suns' locker room. Larry said he and John MacLeod (Suns' Coach) had a long conversation about the game tonight.

December 27. Los Angeles. There isn't much time to stop and reflect. This trip, we have four games in five nights, two sets of back-to-back games. Several of our players had watched the Clippers play before the game tonight; I had seen them play a few days earlier on TV against Houston and I thought they played one of the worst games I had ever seen a professional team play.

Jerry's enjoying a great year.

But you get reminded of this fact: teams always come to play against the Celtics. They hustled and we had a tougher time than I expected.

During the afternoon of the game, a lot of the guys watched the Louisville-Kentucky game and were impressed with Rex Chapman. Also, Cedric Maxwell, who played several years here, missed the game. That disappointed Kevin McHale and Larry. They were fired up to go against Max. The game was tough, but we won it, a game we had to have.

December 29. Sacramento. Yesterday, we flew into Sacramento, the only off-day of the trip. Normally K.C. would give us the day off, but the way we've been playing the last month, he chose instead to have a light practice—shooting, length of the court drills. I think it was a good idea because we remained pretty sharp.

We played one of our best games against Sacramento. Their arena is one of the tougher ones in the league to play in. The court's not any smaller, but the crowd is right on top of the action, and it can be an intimidating factor for visiting teams. I'm playing better; I had been out of action, really, for three weeks with sickness. But my legs are back and I'm shooting the ball better. I was struggling to get my minutes back—after Danny Ainge injured his groin, it proved to work out for me. I played 30 good minutes in Milwaukee and my wind's been back since.

December 30. Seattle. The 4th game of the trip and at this point, everybody's starting to feel it. We checked into the Westin Hotel and got some rest.

Seattle's been tougher this year than most expected. One of the Seattle papers had a reporter at the Kings' game (the game before the Sonics' game). He asked us questions about our year, but it came out as a pretty negative story in the papers out here. In addition, apparently Red Auerbach made some comments about the Sonics being a last place team so they had some impetus for the media.

In general, at the NBA level, this only goes so far. But in this case, it had some effect, I think. Seattle is rebuilding, and a win over us is important to their program. I believe they did have those articles pinned on their blackboard.

But we won the game, anyway, on a bad night against a team which was ready for us. The Green Team did the job. The Sonics had a 15-point lead, but then they got cautious and started walking the ball up. The Green Team pressed them, went after them aggressively on the defensive end. We got back into the ball game, and I think when the starters—who were flat that night—got back in to start the fourth quarter, they were determined to finish Seattle off. Larry and Dennis Johnson won it in the end—which is characteristic of the superstar. Winning games when the games are on the line.

A 4th trip and good feelings. We took the red-eye flight home to Boston, but we had a few hours before the plane. Dennis knew of a nice restaurant, Thirteen Coins, near the Seattle Airport. The team treated—most of the guys on the team had a nice relaxing meal before heading home.

December 31. Boston. I met up with my family in the airport—Joni had taken the kids back to Indiana for the days when I was on the West Coast and the planes from Seattle and Indianapolis arrived at around the same time.

Joni and I went to a New Year's party at Robert and Nancy Parish's. They really went all out and we enjoyed it. We didn't really party too hard; we had a good time, taking time to reflect on the 1986 year, which was a good one for us. And the successful road trip. I think there was a definite, if subtle, resolve to make the commitment to get back to the level of play we produced to win the championship last season. The conditions are different, requiring more of those adjustments teams need to make in order to win. I think we'll do it.

K.C. Jones is Chairman of NF Golf Tourney Again

For the second year, K.C. Jones will be the honorary chairman of the Neurofibromatosis (NF) Charity Golf Tournament. Last year, K.C.'s efforts and popularity helped the NF Foundation raise $30,000 for research.

NF is a neurological tumor disorder that can affect all body systems. NF occurs in 1 in every 3,000 births and has no cure at this time.

K.C.s Corner

Western Renewal

I was particularly happy with our performance on the West Coast as we regained our sense of confidence as a team. I believe a trip like this, including four games against so-called "weaker" teams in the west, was probably vital for us for a number of reasons. We won them all (4-0); we played very well within our offense; we received effective play from our bench and brought Darren Daye along within our scheme; we dug in, one game at a time, which I believe is necessary for our team at this time.

We did not play well in our trips to Philadelphia and Milwaukee, and in retrospect, our sloppiness may have been the jolt we needed to rededicate our efforts as a team. A number of details, when they are not executed on the floor, add up. There may not be a switch on the defensive end because one player didn't know the type of team defense we were in. Another time, especially in the middle segment of the game against Milwaukee, we simply did not execute our offense. We lacked the patience to see all the options in our plays. To state the obvious: offense and defense are related. If you cannot function well on the offensive end, your defense begins to break down. In seven games before the trip into Philadelphia and Milwaukee, our defense had allowed 106 points to Philadelphia, 88 to Cleveland, 98 to New Jersey, 117 to Los Angeles, 98 to Washington, 96 to New York, 101 to Indiana. But we slumped with 122 points to Philadelphia and 120 to Milwaukee.

My strategy to renew our effectiveness was to make practice optional the first day back, work hard on our offense the following two days, and then head out and play the games. We have high self-motivators on our team. I believe we are winners; some time away from the game is sometimes what's needed.

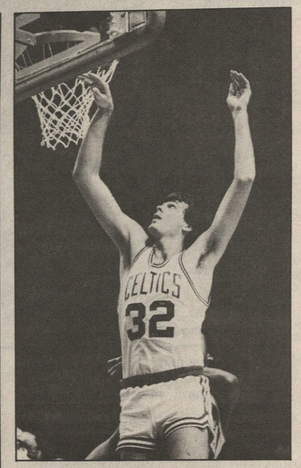
I was pleased with our ballgame in Phoenix. It was important to begin the trip strongly, and we scored 40 points in the first quarter. I think when you play an "underdog," especially on their home floor, you must get established quickly and attempt to control the game as much as possible. We took the game inside to Kevin McHale and made them chase us all night. Winning over Phoenix gave us momentum the next night in Los Angeles—the Clippers played very competitively but we were able to become stronger down the stretch as a team.

Teams have a tendency to turn it on and off in a year when they're trying to repeat championships. The intensity we had last season in our playoff series with Chicago through Houston was extremely high. You think you need to save yourself during the regular season. But I'm certain that we have avoided that pitfall. Injuries hit us, and I suspect it was becoming a mental crutch—we were saying to ourselves, 'We're injured, so we cannot play our best.' We played ourselves out of that on the west coast.

Greg's getting tough off the bench.

Our effort against Sacramento was sharp. Dennis Johnson shot the ball superbly, and our frontcourt got after it all night—on the boards, scoring, playing strong defense. We lost out there last season and we did not want that happening again. We were able to rest most of our starters in the fourth quarter after building up a safe lead, and this had some nice benefits—unexpected rewards—the following night in Seattle.

It seems that during training camp, our leader, Red Auerbach, made a statement that the SuperSonics would probably "finish last. I'd be surprised if they did any better than that." The Sonics have done better than that, much better. They have whipped Houston by 56 points in The Summit. They have received continued excellent play from Xavier McDaniel and strong support from Dale Ellis, Alton Lister, and Clemon Johnson. Tom Chambers has approached the game differently this season, similar to the adjustment has long been known as a top-flight defensive guard.



Kevin took the ball inside vs. Phoenix.

Dominique Wilkens made for Atlanta beginning last season. He has played the total game this season and Seattle is a much improved ballclub under Bernie Bickerstaff.

Throughout much of that last game, Seattle had the best of it. We could not get untracked, our guys weren't after loose balls and our shooting was off. I tried timeouts and individual substitutions which also were ineffective. With time beginning to be a factor, I went to the entire Green Team—consisting of Jerry Sichting, Rick Carlisle, Greg Kite, Darren Daye, and Fred Roberts. They scrapped their way back into the ballgame. I sat there and watched—they forced turnovers, made end to end transitions, and erased a 15-point lead by the Sonics to 80-78 at the end of the 3rd quarter.

We went on to win the ballgame as Larry hit a sideline jump shot in the final seconds of the game. But I believe it was an important win for was because of the number of people who were responsible for it. The easy way out was to simply lose the game—the last game of the trip, New Year's the following Thursday, three wins on the trip anyway. And teams trying to repeat have a tendency to turn it on and off in a season when they're trying to repeat. But we hung in there. It's a way of sustaining the season-long intensity you need to win championships (the regular season title is our immediate goal).

We are shorthanded. I don't pretend that missing Bill Walton and Scott Wedman is something that isn't affecting us. But what we're forced to do is play them one game at a time—tenaciously. The Green Team renewed that message again in Seattle last week. The game was very reminiscent of the stretch last season when Kevin was injured and we were forced to continually remodel the team throughout February. Last season ended with the championship. If we make it all the way again, I predict we'll look back on the last game of 1986, a getaway night in Seattle, as a crucial turning point in our season.

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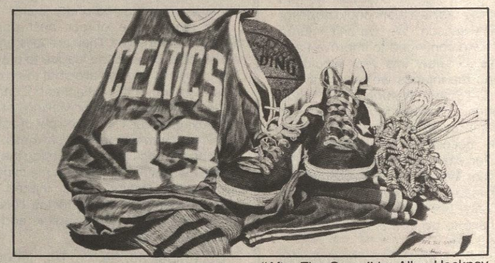

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Supreme Court

By Tony Cooper

All you 76er haters out there can rejoice in the fact that Philly forward **Charles Barkley** is still yapping his head off. In his latest diatribe, Barkley reiterated his hatred for the Atlantic Division rivals from Boston.

"I don't ever want to lose to them Celtics," Barkley said. "They rub it in when they beat you. I've never liked them. Nobody likes them. That's because they're cocky, obnoxious, talking junk.

"You need to be with them to realize how good they think they are. It's in (**Danny**) **Ainge's** blood. He's ruined for life."

But once again, Barkley gave an underhanded display of his respect for **Larry Bird.**

"The Celtics won't slip much, not as long as they've got Bird pushing them," Barkley said. "Larry treats them all the same—like dogs. Treat 'em like dogs and they'll move. That's why they win. Larry's the leader of the pack."

Bird got into the act by saying "in a few years, if you're 6-6, you won't be able to play the game unless you're Michael Jordan."

Barkley's reply? "Larry Bird is bleep?"

When a reporter checked with Barkley to verify the remark, Barkley said, "Larry Bird is still bleep. I'll tell him that to his face. What's he going to do, kick my rear?"

Then, Celtic broadcaster **Johnny Most** said during an interview that Barkley is a "discourteous young man."

Barkley's reply? "And you're a wrinkled old prune."

Stay tuned. By the way, there's no truth to the rumor that Barkley's favorite dessert is Boston cream pie . . .

Nope, former Celtic **Don Chaney** still has a job as the NBA laughingstock. Los Angeles Clippers haven't cut him loose yet. According to another former Celtic, **Cedric Maxwell,** the Clippers' biggest drawback isn't Chaney, but second-year center **Benoit Benjamin,** who has done a grand total of nothing during his brief NBA career.

"Let me ask you something, Mr. Smart Pressman," Maxwell said. "Where do you build a team from? The problem is definitely in the middle. Talk to Ben (Benjamin) and ask him what he does. We need that guy to have a heart transplant."

The Cllipers recently signed **Quintin Dailey,** in the hopes the problem-prone guard can provide a magical elixir to their woes. Dailey shot one for eight in his first game with his new team . . .

ROOKIE WOES: Bulls' forward Brad Sellers was slapped with a four-day suspension after he took another flight home after Chicago lost to the New York Knicks on Christmas Day. And St. John's product **Walter Berry,** a major draft mistake by the Portland Trail Blazers, was recently traded to the San Antonio Spurs for freshman center **Kevin Duckworth.** Berry summarily missed his flight to his first Spurs game and arrived at the game late. Discipline has never been one of Berry's strong suits.

One of the NBA's bright spots of the season has been Denver's **Bill Hanzlik,** who has spent much of his time at the unlikely spot of center, and is doing a good job for the Nuggets. The 6-7 Hanzlik

Remember the Houston Rockets? The same guys who almost wrestled the NBA title away from the Celtics a year ago? They're not looking too good this season and there were reports that pilot **Bill Fitch** was on his way out, but that was taken care of when he signed a new multi-year contract.

"If we can stay around .500, win 40 games and get into the playoffs," Rocket forward **Ralph Sampson** said, "that's what we need to do." A far cry from the dynasty they were talking about last year . . .

There are mega-problems in Detroit, where **Adrian Dantley** doesn't seem to be fitting in. The latest dirt has **Isiah Thomas** and **Bill Laimbeer** forming their own clique, **Vinnie Johnson** and **Rick Mahorn** joining forces and Dantley sulking in his own corner, which is exactly what he did in Utah. Dantley has been less than thrilled by the way Piston Coach **Chuck Daly** has been using him.

"I'm the leading scorer on the team, and all of a sudden, I'm not playing at the end (of games)," Dantley said. "Daly has to decide who is the better player down the stretch. I don't know his reasons. He says he wants to play the whole bench, but this isn't happening at the center spot or the point guard spot, just the three spot, four spot and the two spot.

"They say I'm doing everything they ask. Then I should be playing more . . . "

The Milwaukee Bucks have hired 7-1 **Mike Brittain** as a "film technician," whatever that means. Brittain, a second-round pick of the Spurs in 1985, will work out with assistant coach **Rick Majerus** on the court and on his own in the weight room. He can't practice with the Bucks, though . . .

Speaking of the Bucks, all-world **Sidney Moncrief** has been ailing, but Buck doctor David Haskell states, "Reports of Sidney's death or demise in the NBA are premature and exaggerated. This is just another bump in the road. There are just so many jumps left in his knees, so many miles left in his legs. But he'll be back until they drag him off."

BIRD ON JORDAN: "When he first came into the league, I thought he'd be a great, all-around player. But his game has completely changed. Right now, really, the only thing he does is shoot 30 times a game. I'd never want to play like that. He's got top play like that I guess, but I could never, ever, ever want to take 30-35 shots a game. It's too much of a load every game."

JORDAN ON BIRD: "His thinking (on the court) is much sharper than mine. His movements are so precise he can play up to his ability."

BIRD ON BIRD: "Some guys can compensate for their deficiencies, some can't. I'm one of the fortunate ones who can."

MORE BARKLEY: Kevin McHale doesn't think Barkley's relentless verbiage is all bad. "He adds a little verbal warfare to the rivalry," McHale said."We're a little down in that category since Maxwell left. He was our verbal captain . . . "

Moses Malone, leading the Bullets to a rspectable first half, still has nothing but feelings of acrimony for 76er owner **Harold Katz.** "Maybe Harold will be the Sixers' 12th man. Tell him to come on down to the hoop, and I'll meet him there."

Julius Erving has been making his last go-rounds in cities around the NBA, and all the love and respect felt for him by players, fans, coaches and front office personnel has been coming out.

"There's no way to measure what he has meant, not only to the 76ers, but to the league, to America," former 76er GM **Pat Williams** said. "He brings a quality to everything he's involved in that just enhances it through his presence, his personality, his lifestyle. And that would be true if he were an accountant, a lawyer or a schoolteacher. Julius just happens to be one of the greatest basketball players of all time. Mix that with a personality as stable as his, and you get a package that's never been matched.

"That's what Julius Erving is. There will only be one of him. People talk about the next Dr. J., but there will only be one of him. The combination of athletic greatness and well, human greatness, I don't think we'll ever see that again."

When asked how it feels to play against Erving, Detroit's Thomas said "It's Dr. J. I get to meet Dr. J. When I still walk on court with him—he and I are both captains—I get shivers. I get to talk to him, rub his sweat. You know how many guys would die to do that?"

Said New Jersey Net forward **Orlando Woolridge:** "Each player should model himself after him. Try and go out and do the things he does so well. He sets a great example for kids—and grownups too."

FROM THE QUOTEBOOK: Malone happens to be the highest paid employee in the Washington, D.C. area. "He's the best rebounder in the Washington area, ain't he," Barkley said . . . Don't let Gorbachev hear this, but Russian star **Arvidas Sabonis** wouldn't mind coming to America and playing in the NBA.

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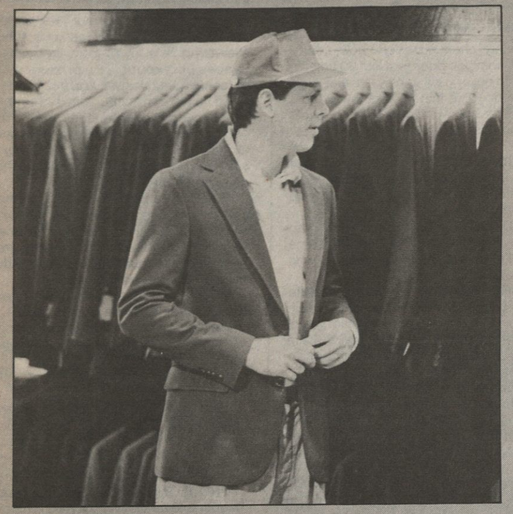
Celts Enjoy Mr. Sid's Luncheon



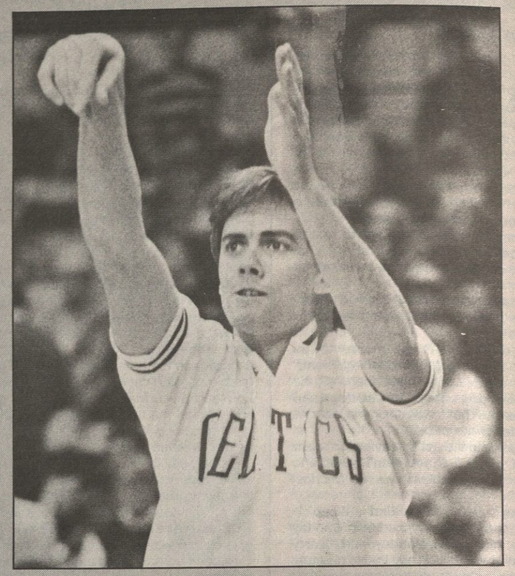
Danny checks out a suit coat.

On December 18, members of the Celtics attended a luncheon at Mr. Sid's, a fine men's clothing store located in Newton Centre, MA. Players and coaches were the guests of Ira Segal, president of the store, who wished to honor the team for its outstanding championship season.

"We just wanted to let the guys know how much they are appreciated," said Segal who is an avid Celtics fan. "At the same time, we wanted to introduce the players and coaches to the store."

Several players took the opportunity to browse through the store and sample some of the fine clothing. In addition, many of the players shot some pool and even received hair cuts in the store's private hair-styling shop.

Celtics Sign Conner Henry



The Boston Celtics have signed guard Conner Henry to a ten-day contract Henry, 23, was a 1986 graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara, and was the Houston Rockets' fourth round draft choice (89th overall) in the 1986 NBA Draft in June, 1986. The 6-7, 195-pound guard played in 18 games this season with the Rockets.

Conner will wear uniform number 43, and he will be in uniform Friday night when the Celtics return to Boston Garden after a four-game road trip to host the Chicago Bulls.

Boston Celtics Crossword Puzzle

CLUES

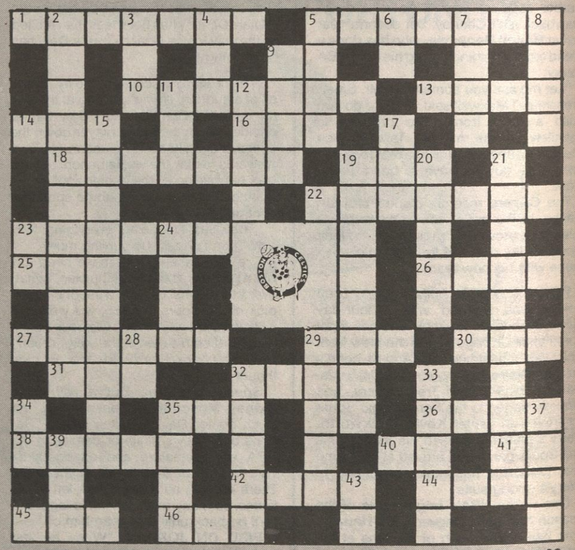
ACROSS

1. First team Celtics defeated in 1986-87 season
5. When the Celtics win, you and I celebrate the _____
9. _____ kind to animals
10. Bostonians self-pride is this
13. Watch this BC star WALTON
14. A former Celtic player RIEBE
16. Tax collectors
18. Ball control by any teammate
19. "A girl named _____" is also a Celtic fan
22. Our team is off to another _____ season
23. College or professional _____
25. A single point score
26. To run
27. A lagging position
29. Suitable
30. Attempt
31. Male name, for short
32. Hurt feeling
35. Space terminology
36. Postal delivery
38. Celtics coach
40. Word of greeting from a fan
41. Boston Gardens is the place _____ be
42. A former Celtic player ARCHIBALD
44. Child playthings
45. President of the Celtics AUERBACH
46. Scorekeeper's mark

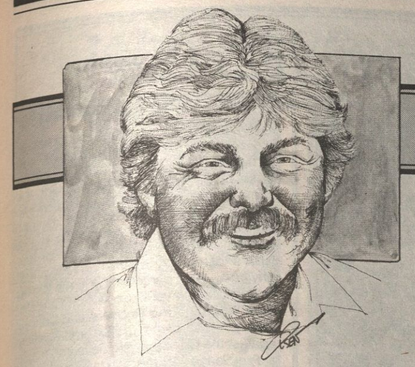
DOWN

2. Some players shoot a free throw like this
3. Young boy title
4. Guest marker
5. Retirees
6. Chris Ford
7. _____ State University
8. A sudden outcry from the crowd
9. MVP of 1985-86 NBA championship game
11. Wedding vow
12. Number of seconds left on clock
15. Irish gremlin
17. Entertainment
19. Watch this BC star: JERRY _____
20. Team opponent
21. Michigan State or Brigham Young
23. Related to Ltd.
24. When the score is tied
28. To enter
29. A certain place in team standings
32. Free throw score is one _____
33. A former Celtic player: GARFIELD _____
34. Dennis Johnson
35. Not new
37. Column in team standings
39. Musical composition
43. A former Celtic player SEARCY

By Robert L. Jackson, Jr.

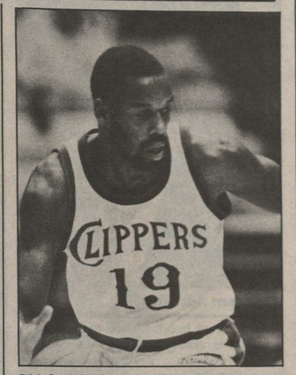


Solution to puzzle on page 26



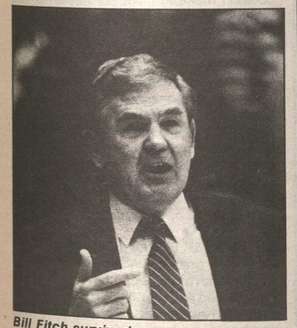
Glenn Ordway

Keeping a Proper Perspective



Did Cedric duck the Celts?

What is it about the west coast that seems to have an enlightening effect on the Celtics? A year ago the Green followed an embarrassing double overtime Christmas loss in New York with a three game road sweep. This time around they followed a lost weekend in Philly and Milwaukee with a four game sweep culminated by an emotional come-from-behind victory in Seattle. Déjà vu? It's almost as if this team has a pain threshold. Once they cross it and they no longer can endure the hurt, they wake up and turn it around. Let's face it, there was a minimal panic effect throughout the streets of Boston. A few people were wounded while jumping off the bandwagon. You've got to keep the entire picture in its proper perspective. It's a long season. At the one third mark last year, the Lakers were the odds-on favorite to win it all and be the first to cop back-to-backs in sixteen years. History will show it never happened. The team that is playing the best basketball in April and May with the fewest health problems is the team that will probably take it all. At last check the Boston contingent was still very much in the picture. There's no denying that a somewhat healthy Bill Walton is a must in completing that picture but it's only January. At this juncture there doesn't seem to be a totally dominant team out there. Granted, Los Angeles sports the best record. But despite a big win in Boston, they have fattened up on weak Western Conference opponents. And I'm thoroughly convinced that the East is superior to the West. Atlanta may be able to lay claim to the honor of "NBA best" right now. But let's remember, though they possess size, speed and depth . . . How much playoff crunch time experience do they have in their portfolio? The Celtics have that post season savvy. And don't discount the Houston Rockets quite yet. Bill Fitch has emerged the winner of a knock-down, drag-out war with some of his players. How will his troops now react to the fact that they're not going to effectively dump the coach? Maybe now they'll just say the hell with it and get back to playing contending calibre basketball. God knows they have the talent. We've only turned the corner on the first lap. There's a long way to go in the season.



Bill Fitch survived a coup attempt.

Some Curious Thoughts from Tinsel Town and Other Far Off Western Lands. Some Clipper insiders were questioning the severity of Cedric Maxwell's food poisoning ailment that prevented him from suiting up for the Celtics game. You may remember a year ago, Kevin McHale and Larry Bird burned the former Celt forward early in a Boston blowout at the L.A. Sports Arena. Some close to the team felt that Mr. Max was not up for a repeat performance . . . The Sacramento crowd (all 10,333) may be the loudest in the league but when you get an early lead on the Kings as the Celts did, you could easily get confused and think you were at a funeral instead of a basketball game. Their famous crowd noise barometer only peaked once all night . . . when Larry Bird was introduced . . . They play a totally different brand of ball out west. It's more of a run and gun game as opposed to the Eastern set-up and bang, aggressive defensive style.

When the Celtics are away... they're at home on 56 WLVI

Home of Champions!

Celtics Confidential

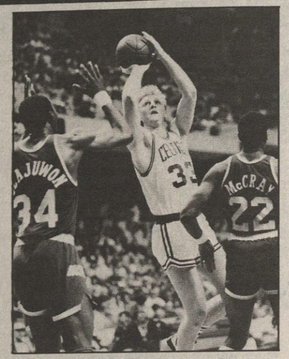
By Bob Schron

Awards. With the end of the year, publications around the sports-world announced their Athlete of the Year awards. **Larry Bird**, likely the best player ever, captured three recently. *The Sporting News* named Bird as its "Man of the Year," the first time a basketball player garnered the trophy (Commissioner Larry O'Brien won the honor in 1976 after successfully negotiating a merger between the old American Basketball Association and the National Basketball Association). Bird also won the award from *The Boston Herald* and he was presented the award after the team finished practice, Christmas Eve. Bird also won the accolade from the new *National Sports Review*—as man of the year. **Jan Kemp**, the English professor at the University of Georgia who blew the whistle on that school's athletic/academic policies and won her suit in court, won NSR's woman of the year . . . The Celtics Dinner and Fashion Show, held annually to benefit the Massachusetts Special Olympics, will be held this year on Thursday evening, March 5th at Copley Place in Boston. Members of the team and their wives and families will model some of the latest fashions of *Yolanda's* and *Mr. Tux* of Waltham. Selected Special Olympics athletes will also model. In addition to the fashion show and dinner which follows, there will be a silent auction of Celtics memorabilia and finally **M.L. Carr** will auction valuable trips and other Celtic-related items. For further information about this black-tie benefit for a worthy cause, contact the Massachusetts Special Olympics office at 617/245-5570.

On the Court. According to Bird, **Greg Kite**'s play has suffered because he has forgotten his role. "I think people got on Greg and told him he should shoot more. Greg can play. He can help us if he realizes he doesn't have to score out there to be effective." . . . The Celtics benefited from four days off after back-to-back pastings in Philadelphia and Milwaukee, December 19 & 20 . . . "We got away from it for awhile and we were refreshed," remarked **K.C. Jones**. "We came back and worked with intensity and I was particularly pleased with the effort of the bench." . . . Players who have worked hardest on the weights in-season: **Kevin McHale** (far and away the leader), **Sam Vincent**, **Jerry Sichting**, **Rick Carlisle**, **Danny Ainge**, and **Greg Kite** . . . Opposing teams have come out running against the Celtics, hoping to exploit what they perceive to be aging, injury, and lack of depth on the part of the defending champions.

Scouting. The Christmas holidays marked an extremely busy period for **Ed Badger**, the team's head scout in the collegiate area. He viewed ten college games in five days with the plethora of holiday tournaments taking place . . . He's high on a guard in the Chicago area . . . But, "with a team like ours, it's been hard finding anyone who can really play for us" . . . **Rick Weitzman** has done some scouting in Providence and in the greater Boston area, but his activity picks up considerably after the New Year . . . **Jimmy Rodgers** was scouting the CBA before the Christmas holiday. "Just to keep tabs on what is going on there," he offered before Christmas . . . Another insider thinks there isn't one player in that entire circuit who could play for the Celtics. It's an opinion, says this source, shared by some of the coaches in that league . . . Badger and Weitzman, incidentally, remain optimistic regarding **Sam Vincent**'s abilities. But the 2nd-year pro has not played well since being removed from the rotation after a bad outing against the Knicks, November 27 . . . **Pat Riley** on the Lakers' objectives when they stopped the Celtics, 117-110, December 12 to halt the Celtics' 48 game Boston Garden winning streak: "We wanted to continue to advance the ball upcourt as quickly as possible and not be discouraged by their ability to get back quickly on defense. 2nd, we wanted to concentrate on doubling their post-up men and not allow Bird-McHale-Parish to break 90. Third, I wanted our players to extend the court defensively. It's the way our team has to play in order to win against Houston and Boston." . . .

M.L. Carr: Auctioneer.



Larry voted "Man of the Year."

Words from K.C. Four years ago, when it appeared **K.C. Jones** would never again coach in the NBA, he was asked about taking a head coaching position in the collegiate ranks. He gave the appearance of one who had thought hard about that decision but wouldn't do it. "I don't see myself traveling constantly and trying to recruit," he stated . . . Back to the future, the Coach was asked recently about Charles Barkley's controversial talking game. "It's not the perfect situation," Jones said. "But you would tolerate it from him because he works so hard on the court." . . . K.C. walked down to the other end of the court at practice at Hellenic College last week to personally intervene between **Kevin McHale** and **Greg Kite** as those two players battled for postup position. You can count the number of times he has done that on one hand in Jones's three and a half seasons as coach . . . **McHale** and **K.C.** did a Public Service Announcement for the NBA's campaign against drinking and driving . . . Also participating in the filming as "practice players" were **Rick Carlisle, Sam Vincent, Fred Roberts,** and **Connor Henry.** Henry, who played impressively against the Celtics when the teams met in a Pre-Season game in Hartford in October, was signed by the Celtics to a ten-day contract December 31.

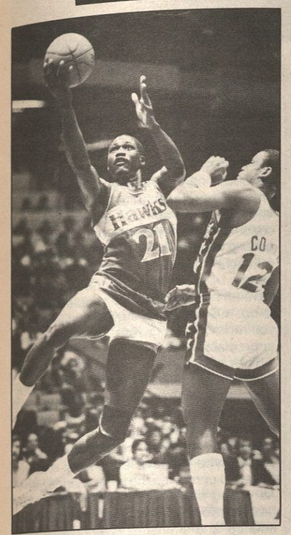
Football Fever. Tod Rosensweig, Vice-President of Marketing and Communications for the Celtics, had great satisfaction from the Washington Redskins' success in the recent National Football League playoffs. Rosensweig is originally from Washington, D.C. and he took in the NFC championship at the Meadowlands . . . **Dennis Johnson** to **Connor Henry** at practice: "You OK? Don't be nervous. Just do what you do best, what got you here in the first place. Just play your game" . . .

Fordie Anderson, a former Golden State Scout and **Sam Jones,** former Celtic great guard and Hall of Famer (elected in 1983) were named as scouts for the Celtics, January 2nd. "We just felt we needed more coverage," stated Celtic General Manager, **Jan Volk.** "Fordie will do a lot of work in the Southwest, including Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Kansas. Sam is very familiar with the southeast—both in established schools and out of the way places." . . . Jones, of course, was recommended to **Red Auerbach** from Laurinburg Institute in North Carolina by **Bones McKinney,** who played for Red with the Washington Caps . . . **Red Auerbach** on the length of games in the league: "A way to shorten the games would be to possibly reduce the amount of time timeouts (themselves) last in the final minutes of a game, when the timeouts are obviously to draw up a play. Also, we might limit the number of timeouts a team can take in the final two minutes to two." . . . **Byron Scott,** normally a sharp-shooter from the 3-point distance, was asked to compete in the inaugural 3-Point Contest in Dallas last year at the All-Star Game, won by **Larry Bird.** But Scott couldn't make it, using the break to get married instead. Asked how he would do against Bird in a similar competition this season, Scott stated, "I'd win . . . No doubt . . . Bring Larry on!" Scott was half-joking . . . One assistant coach in the league and a respected one, turned to his head coach recently with the Celtics winning by 104-93 with 2:55 remaining in the game in an early January game at the Boston Garden. "Take everybody out," he suggested to the head coach. "We have a game tomorrow night and there's no way we'll beat (the Celtics) behind by this much in the Boston Garden." . . . The injury plague continued: Bird was forced to sit out practice in the first week of January with a bad back . . . Celtics' offices were closed at 2 p.m. New Year's Eve and all day on New Years . . . To all, a productive and happy new year.

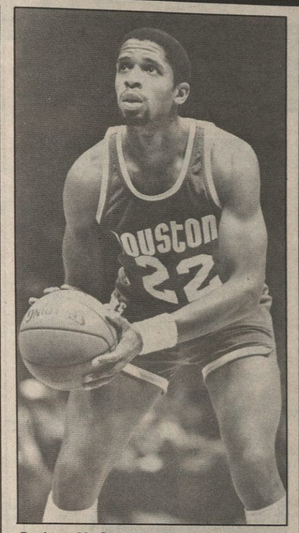
"Flashdance" Star Found Courtside

Jennifer Beals, noted actress (Flashdance) and current student, took in the Celtics-Bulls game on the 2nd of January. Her attendance and interest in the team is always appreciated (especially by our roving photographer).

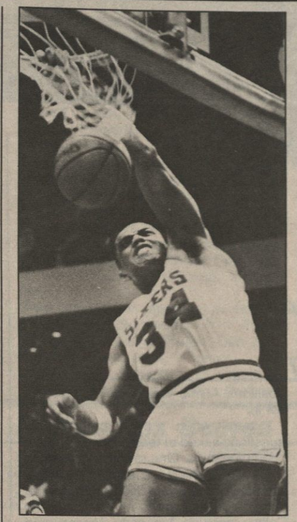
John Havlicek Rates the Small Forwards



Dominique: A great all-around player.



Rodney McCray: Works on defense.



Charles Barkley: Great Ball-handler.

John Havlicek is the player who insured that the Celtics dynasty would continue after Bill Russell retired in 1969. After the team won 11 titles in Russell's 13 playing seasons, Havlicek keyed two more team titles in 1974 and 1976—he won eight in all. Havlicek's individual honors are actually countless, but, he was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1983 and he was selected to the NBA's 35th Anniversary All-Time Team. After Russell retired, Havlicek averaged 28.9 ppg in 1970-71 and was named NBA All-Star First Team in four straight seasons.

"Hondo" provided continuity and development to Red Auerbach's 6th Man strategy, too. Havlicek played one season with Frank Ramsey, then took over the role for the next six years, artfully swinging betweeen Guard and Forward. The game became more specialized (with the increased use of hardship eligibility and expansion, raw talent was substituted for technique when it came time for players to make the professional level). In retrospect, John Havlicek was the game's first bonafide small forward.

He ran the court like a panther and he defended players like Oscar Robertson, Jerry West, and Julius Erving by matching his foe's skill with his own athletic ability and guile. He consistently wanted the ball in the clutch. Havlicek, one of the hearts of the Celtic organization, rated the small forward position for *Celtics Pride,* stressing the influence the Celtics' system had on his own play at the position.

"We had built the Celtics team differently from other teams when I joined the Celtics (in 1962)," Havlicek said last week. "We were built with quickness and speed, because we could run the floor on the break because we had Russell. People talk about "Big" Forwards now, but that was the normal attack in the league when I broke in.

"Other teams didn't know how to handle us. I would be matched up against someone bigger to take advantage of my quickness. Russell would get the ball off the boards, and I would be able to consistently beat my opponent down floor.

"That was the advantage and why the position began on our team. Because of our fast break."

Michael Cooper, Los Angeles. "The reason, other than Magic Johnson as point guard, that the Lakers run so well is because of Michael Cooper. He is an aggressive defender and he fills the lanes of the break. Cooper is one of the best at the position for another reason: He's able to swing between Guard and Forward and the Lakers are able to run continuously for 48 minutes."

Dominique Wilkens, Atlanta. "I think Dominique Wilkens is a great player all-around. He's grown considerably in the last two years, making his total game rise to the level of his natural talents. He's able to run the floor and handle the ball on the break equally well."

James Worthy, Los Angeles. "A team's break can be fast and quick or it can be slower, a secondary break which means teams just get into their set offense quickly. Worthy is another player who makes the Laker break move—he's always out on the wings. And he's able to convert his skill into points."

Larry Bird, Boston. "Although Larry plays the position formally in the Celtic offense with Kevin McHale at the big forward, Bird is not a true small forward. Larry can get the break started, but he's not fast or quick. Larry's a great player and he finds ways to win games. But he doesn't fit the description of a running forward."

Adrian Dantley, Detroit and **Mark Aguirre,** Dallas. "Regarding size, these players fill the role of a small forward. But the difference here is that both Dantley and Aguirre are post up players. All of their production comes out of the set offense."

Charles Barkley, Philadelphia. "Barkley, like **Terry Cummings** of Milwaukee, is a blend of power and small forward. In the transition game, he is as much of an offensive threat as, for example, Kevin McHale is in the set-up offense. Barkley can bring the ball up himself in transition, a one-man transition, that is. If nothing is there, Barkley can post up and get points that way. Or he can get points on his speed. People in Boston talk about McHale being such a tough matchup for Barkley. But I'm not certain Kevin can stop Barkley, either. Cummings has similar physical power as Barkley, but not nearly as much ball-handling skill."

Alex English, Denver. "At least half of the teams in the league are led in scoring by the player playing the small forward spot. English can score—he's very adept in the early offense of Denver, which prefers to get their shot up in the first 13-15 seconds of the 24-second clock."

Rodney McCray, Houston. "For the Rockets, playing opposite Ralph Sampson, McCray plays a low-key role. But he's effective—playing strong, moving without the ball, and working hard on the defensive end."

Havlicek has remained adamant about the game today compared to the way it was played twenty years ago. "I think the players today are bigger, faster, and can do more things on an individual basis.

"But I think the players who played when I first broke in, through the sixties, knew how to play the team game much better.

"Our Celtic team utilized the break by releasing the small forward. Having Russell was indispensible; other players on the team just had to box out and keep their men off the boards and Russell got the rebound. I'm not sure players today are that disciplined in their fundamentals.

"Small forwards ideally should be able to swing, too. They should be able to bring the ball up the floor against a press."

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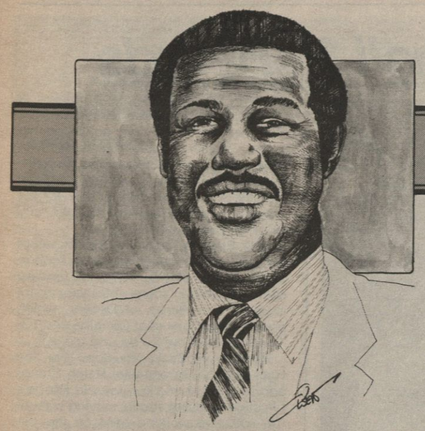


M.L. Carr

Celts Will Finish Strong

The National Basketball Association schedule has reached the New Year point, and it's a challenging period for teams to sustain early season intensity. The best teams in the league will be able to make a substantial push right now because historically there is a letdown from the holidays to the All-Star break. I believe teams are enthusiastic when the season starts and in the end they compete intensely for playoff positions. At mid-year, however, the blues set in.

I laugh when I think about typical questions asked of teams trying to repeat championships. One of these queries is: "Are you peaking too soon?" It's funny and sad for this year's Celtic team. With so many injuries, there is no danger of the Celtics peaking too early. Having said that, I firmly think the Boston Celtics are in a correct frame of mind to make themselves champions once again. There are enough players on the Celtics who are in their prime; there is a nice mix of mellowed seasoned veterans; there is a superior coaching staff. Bill Walton's absence *is* critical. But I believe the Celtics have made a determination to go all the way even if the Redhead doesn't make it back this season.

Historically, I have been on teams which have failed to make this mid-year push, and Celtics teams which have gone all the way. My free agent year in Detroit proved disastrous when our key player, Bob Lanier, went down with an injury (1978-79); here in Boston, matters were totally different. 1981-82: With Larry Bird, Tiny Archibald, and Chris Ford all injured, we still went on an 18-game winning streak.

But we had problems in Bill Fitch's last season here, although other factors meant defeat then. There was tension because of players wanting more (playing) minutes, or others needing to get their contracts straightened out. Inevitably there were problems of communications between the Coach and the players.

Championship teams find a way, and the best method is in practice. "Peaking too soon" cannot happen to teams which practice hard and go at it in every game. You do play as you practice. When coaches have a feel for that—that is, in getting their teams to practice well, teams will have a successful season. That's the beauty of K.C. Jones and his staff. If you have an hour and twenty minutes of work to do, K.C. will practice you that long and you're through. Players understand and appreciate that.

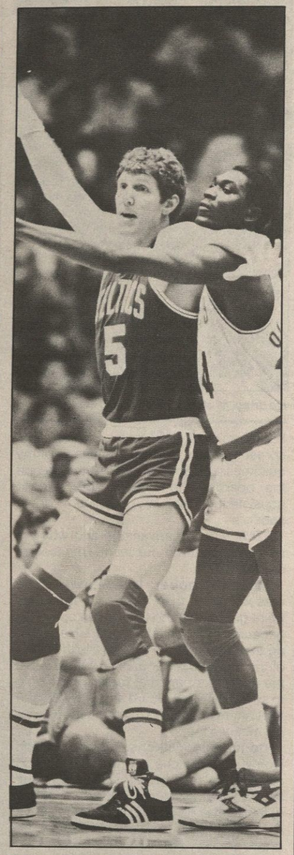
The opposition throughout the league is tough this year. Atlanta is not a fluke: Dominique Wilkens, players with young legs, and a year of credible playoff experience. The Bulls, who the Celtics play three times in January, have Michael Jordan who I believe is the most exciting player to come into the league since Larry. As young players, both Bird and Jordan had immediate court presence, confidence, and charisma. I have read where Jordan has been criticized for shooting too much but I believe he is doing what he needs to do to keep his team competitive. With Larry, I knew when I saw him as a rookie in rookie camp that he was something special. Because he was such a great passer, Larry made passes as a rookie that 10-year veterans didn't dare try.

I think the Lakers are the team to beat in the Western Conference. Magic Johnson is having an excellent season and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, judging from what he did here in December (26 points in 26 minutes) still is outstanding. Magic has always been a focal point on their team. But in do-or-die time, they'll go to Kareem, still with his hook. I don't think the Lakers' bench is as strong as in past years, however.

It's an age-old saying, by Red Auerbach, but I believe it to be true: "Don't even worry who's in the other locker room. Get prepared yourself, and deal with the task at hand." I find it applies in business; our business goes after clients and we don't really worry about what our competitors are doing. Oh, you know what they're up to, from time to time, but successful businesses and great teams go out and shape their own destinies.

In certain ways, the great teams become great by being successful when these mid-season doldrums set in. For this Celtic team, a number of factors are operating. These Celtics are veterans and they know that this is a golden opportunity to repeat. Winning two titles in a row will be that much harder, because that means winning two more titles if they lose it this year.

Also, if there are younger players who might tail off right now, the advantage of veteran players on the team will help them through it. Veterans have been through this before. They know how to keep themselves motivated for an entire season. The veterans and the coaching staff will make sure this Celtics team has another great season.



Walton will be missed.

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By the Numbers

Celtics Regroup

The Celtics, after absorbing bad defeats in Philadelphia and Milwaukee in a back-to-back game road trip December 19-30, fought back into the race for the best record in the NBA with a five-game winning streak with the week ending January 2nd. The final win of the span, a 113-99 win over the Bulls was achieved at the Boston Garden, where the team will play 7 of their next 10 games. The brief west coast trip marked the return to efficiency of the Green (bench) Team: effective play in Phoenix and Seattle helped to nail down an unbeaten trip, the team's eighth unbeaten road trip in the past two seasons.

Danny Ainge. Ainge was injured in the fourth quarter of road loss at Philadelphia. Had 18 points—10 assists at New York. Missed the Milwaukee game but was helped by four-day layoff before team went on trip west. 14 points—7 assists at LA, Dec. 27, 15 points, 8 assists, 1 steal vs. Bulls.

Larry Bird. Returned to form after injured during Phil.-Mil. massacre, after great back-to-back games at New York (29 points—11 rebounds) and Indiana (34 points). Scored 26 and 27 at Phoenix and LA, respectively, and then found shooting range in Sacramento: 11-17 FG with 11 rebounds, 6 assists, and steal. 27 points, including 3-3 in 3-pointers in Seattle; 37 points, 8 rebounds, 9 assists vs. Chicago. Leads NBA in FT %, 3rd in scoring, 26.8 ('85-86, 5th in league).

Rick Carlisle. Although his playing time has been limited, Carlisle has maintained playing sharpness. Six minutes, 1-2 from floor (despite 5 PF) in 122-112 win over Suns. Helped key Sonics win with pressing defense, 2 points, 202 from free throw line, a rebound, and assist in trip's last game.

win over LA, 9-11 from field, 22 points, 8 assists, 5 rebounds in Sacramento, 10 points, 7 assists, game-saving blocked shot in Seattle.

Greg Kite. Had some effective outings after fight with Ewing in New York (Ewing actually did all the punching while Kite pursued without fear). Gave team boost with 22 minute, 3-rebound, 3-block, 2-point night in Philadelphia, the team's best player. Aided pressing team in Seattle win, although his line only reveals one blocked shot in six minutes of playing time.

Kevin McHale.Doug Collins, Bulls' Coach, joins the growing fraternity: McHale, Collins said after Boston won 113-99, "is the toughest matchup in the league." McHale's 28-game string of 20+ points was snapped in Seattle (17-points, 11-rebounds that night), but not before Kevin turned in these performances: 32-points, 15 rebounds, 2 blocks in Phoenix, 26 points, 12 rebounds, 3 blocks in LA, 20 points, 9 rebounds, 3 blocks in Sacramento.

Darren Daye. Finally adjusted to Celts—"This team plays different from the rest of the teams in the league"—Dave. Against Suns, 4-6 from field in 13 minutes, scoring 9 with 3 rebounds, 2 assists, and steal. Ran the floor like a seasoned Celt vs. Seattle: 5 points in 9 minutes, 2 defensive rebounds, 2 assists, a steal and a block.

Connor Henry. Signed to a Free Agent 10-day pact, December 31.

Dennis Johnson. *Herald* headline, New Year's Eve: "DJ Should Be All-Star." Coached team after Jones and Ford ejected in Milwaukee. Had strong western swing: 12 points, 6 assists, 4 rebounds in Phoenix, 15, including critical points in

Robert Parish. Parish was the team's force in Philadelphia—21 points, 8 rebounds in losing effort. Sparked the team to win in Sacramento, scoring 24 with 11 rebounds. This, after 17-point 12 rebound game in LA. Parish finished the job in Seattle after Green Team rallied C's: 23 points, 8 rebounds, and blocked shot and dominating center play in 4th quarter. Returned home with 15-point, 7 rebound, 3 blocks night vs. Chicago, January 2nd.

Fred Roberts. An important contributor to start trip: 29 minutes, 7-11 FG, 7 rebounds, 2 assists in Phoenix, Dec. 26th. 8 points, 2 rebounds, 2 assists in 19 minutes vs. LA. 6 points in 13 minutes as Green Team brought the Celtics back into the game in Seattle, December 30th.

Jerry Sichting. Returned to form,, which was outstanding before illness, during western swing. 9 points in 13 minutes in Phoenix; 8 points, 4 assists, 2 rebounds in 26 minutes vs. Kings; in 20 minutes against Sonics, 9 points on 4-6 shooting, with on one assist.

Sam Vincent. Growing pains continue for the 2nd year payer, the team's first-round draft choice in 1985. Has practiced well and K.C. Jones apparently continues to like him as a player. 6 points in 5 minutes at Philadelphia, 4 points in 3 minutes in Milwaukee, 2 points in 6 minutes at Phoenix, and 2 points in 4 minutes in Sacramento.

Bill Walton. On injured list, November 10.

Scott Wedman. On injured list, December 11.

Celtics Box Scores

Celtics, 122 — Suns, 112
at Phoenix
BOSTON

	Min	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-T	A	F	Pts
Bird	36	9-20	5-6	0-4	6	2	26
McHale	36	15-18	2-2	6-15	7	3	32
Parish	27	5-6	2-4	1-3	2	5	12
Ainge	32	2-6	0-0	1-5	8	2	5
Johnson	34	4-6	3-6	0-4	6	1	12
Roberts	29	7-11	0-0	2-7	2	3	14
Sichting	18	4-8	0-0	0-1	4	1	8
Daye	13	4-6	1-2	2-3	2	2	9
Vincent	6	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	2	2
Carlisle	6	1-2	0-0	0-0	1	5	2
Kite	3	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals	240	52-86	13-20	12-42	38	26	122

FG% .605, FT% .650; Three-pt. goals: 5-9, .556 (Bird 3-5, Ainge 1-2, Johnson 1-2). Team Rebounds: 11; Blocked Shots: 5 (Bird 1, McHale 2, Parish 1, Roberts 1). Turnovers: 24 (Bird 3, McHale 7, Akinge 3, Johnson 1, Roberts 2, Daye 3, Vincent 3, Carlisle 2). Steals: 7 (McHale 1, Ainge 3, Sichting 2, Daye 1).

PHOENIX

	Min	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-T	A	F	Pts
Gattison	30	5-14	0-0	4-10	2	2	12
Pinckney	35	5-9	9-12	2-8	3	3	19
Adams	16	3-4	0-0	0-0	3	3	6
Davis	29	9-13	0-0	2-2	3	1	18
Humphries	28	2-5	4-6	1-2	8	2	8
Bedford	27	4-15	1-4	2-4	1	4	9
Sanders	24	9-15	0-0	3-3	1	1	18
Hornacek	20	1-3	4-4	0-2	7	1	6
Addison	8	2-7	0-0	1-2	0	1	4
Gondrezick	19	3-8	1-1	1-4	1	1	7
Vanos	4	2-3	1-2	1-2	0	0	5
Totals	240	46-96	20-29	17-39	29	20	112
Phoenix			30	27	26	29	— 112
BOSTON			40	28	29	25	— 122

A — 14,519; T — 2:00
Officials — Paul Mihalik, Bruce Alexander.

Celtics, 114 — L.A. Clippers, 101
at Los Angeles
BOSTON

	Min	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-T	A	F	Pts
McHale	42	13-18	0-0	4-12	6	3	26
Bird	42	11-24	3-4	1-7	8	0	27
Parish	34	6-13	5-5	5-12	1	3	17
Ainge	36	5-9	4-4	0-2	7	1	14
Johnson	36	6-11	3-5	1-3	8	3	15
Roberts	19	2-2	4-5	0-2	2	4	8
Daye	6	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	2	2
Vincent	1	0-1	0-0	0-1	1	0	0
Kite	1	0-1	0-0	0-1	1	0	0
Carlisle	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	37	0	0
Totals	240	46-85	19-23	12-41	39	16	114

FG% .541, FT% .826; Three-pt. shot: 3-9, (Bird 2-6, Ainge 0-1, Johnson 0-1, Sichting 0-1). Team Rebounds: 15; Blocked: 9 (Bird 5, McHale 3, Roberts 1). Turnovers: 19 (McHale 1, Bird 3, Parish 3, Ainge 5, Johnson 3, Roberts 2, Daye 1, Sichting 1). Steals: 5 (McHale 1, Bird 1, Parish 1, Ainge 1, Johnson 1).

LOS ANGELES

	Min	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-T	A	F	Pts
Cage	36	9-17	3-4	5-10	2	3	21
Fields	21	5-11	6-6	3-5	6	6	16
Benjamin	39	6-11	1-1	2-9	3	2	13
Woodson	21	3-7	0-0	0-1	4	3	6
Drew	36	5-14	0-0	1-2	4	2	10
White	27	5-11	2-2	2-4	1	4	12
Valentine	15	2-5	0-0	0-1	4	1	5
Gordon	18	5-12	2-2	1-3	5	2	12
Nimphius	14	3-8	0-0	0-0	1	0	6
Kempton	7	0-1	0-0	0-2	0	2	0
Totals	240	43-77	14-15	14-37	24	26	101
LA Clippers			28	27	21	25	— 101
BOSTON			29	28	24	33	— 114

A — 14,410; T — 1:54.
Officials — Tommy Nunez, Jim Capers.

Boston, 119 — Kings, 102
at Sacramento
BOSTON

	Min	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-T	A	F	Pts
Bird	39	11-17	4-4	1-11	6	2	27
McHale	35	10-14	0-1	1-9	1	2	20
Parish	38	10-15	4-4	7-11	2	1	24
Ainge	25	3-12	2-2	0-1	3	3	8
Johnson	37	9-11	4-4	1-5	8	5	22
Roberts	16	2-5	1-1	0-2	0	1	5
Sichting	26	2-4	3-3	1-2	4	3	8
Daye	7	1-1	0-2	0-1	0	1	2
Kite	1	0-0	1-4	0-2	0	1	1
Vincent	4	1-3	0-0	0-1	1	0	2
Carlisle	4	0-2	0-0	1-1	1	0	0
Totals	240	49-84	19-25	12-45	26	19	119

FG% .583, FT% .760; Three-pt. goals: 2-4, .500 (Bird 1-2, Ainge 0-1, Sichting 1-1). Team Rebounds: 5; Blocked Shots: 7 (McHale 3, Parish 3, Roberts 1). Turnovers: 11 (McHale 3, Parish 1, Johnson 3, Roberts 2, Sichting 1, Daye 1). Steals: 2 (Bird 1, Carlisle 1).

SACRAMENTO

	Min	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-T	A	F	Pts
Tyler	24	6-10	0-0	4-5	0	1	12
Thorpe	26	5-11	2-2	3-6	0	3	12
Thompson	24	4-12	2-4	5-7	1	3	10
Smith	19	2-9	2-4	0-2	0	2	6
Theus	32	6-14	4-4	1-3	7	1	16
Olberding	6	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	3	0
Wilson	25	4-9	1-2	1-4	5	2	9
Rogers	12	0-6	0-0	1-2	0	2	0
Johnson	21	4-13	4-4	0-3	2	0	12
Kleine	28	8-12	1-1	3-9	2	3	17
Steppe	11	2-3	0-0	1-2	1	0	4
Pressley	12	1-3	2-2	1-4	5	1	4
Totals	240	42-102	18-23	23-46	23	21	102

FG% .412, FT% .783; Three-pt. goals: 0-2, .000 (Wilson 0-1, Steppe 0-1).Team Rebounds: 10; Blocked Shots: 2 (Thompson 1, Pressley 1). Turnovers: 7 (Tyler 1, Theus 1, Wilson 2, Kleine 2, Pressley 1). Steals: 5 (Thompson 2, Smith 1, Olberding 1, Pressley 1). Technical Fouls: Illegal Defense, Sacramento 6:27 1st Qtr. Johnson (Sacramento) 1:25 3rd Qtr.

Sacramento	24	31	17	30	— 102
BOSTON	39	25	29	26	— 119

A — 10,333; T — 1:55
Officials — Bill Oakes, Bernie Fryer

Celtics, 104—SuperSonics, 102
at Seattle
BOSTON

	Min	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-T	A	F	Pts
Bird	41	10-19	4-5	0-8	6	1	27
McHale	37	6-12	5-6	7-11	3	2	17
Parish	38	11-19	1-3	2-8	0	5	23
Ainge	33	2-6	0-0	0-2	4	2	5
Johnson	37	3-11	4-4	0-4	7	2	10
Roberts	13	0-3	6-6	1-3	0	1	6
Sichting	20	4-8	1-1	0-0	1	2	9
Daye	9	1-2	3-4	0-2	2	1	5
Kite	6	0-0	0-2	0-0	0	1	0
Carlisle	6	0-0	2-2	0-1	1	0	2
Totals	240	37-78	26-33	10-39	24	17	104

FG% .474, FT% .787; Three-pt. goals: 4-6, .667 (Bird 3-3, Ainge 1-2, Johnson 0-1). Team Rebounds: 11; Blocked Shots: 6 (Parish 1, McHale 1, Kite 1, Daye 1, Ainge 1, Johnson 1). Turnovers: 19 (Bird 1, McHale 6, Parish 2, Ainge 1, Johnson 3, Roberts 3, Daye 1, Carlisle 2). Steals: 5 (Bird 1, Parish 1, Johnson 1, Sichting 1, Daye 1). Technical Fouls: Illegal Defense 2, Bird, Rogers: 0:00 2nd Qtr., Coach Jones, 3:10 3rd Qtr.

SEATTLE

	Min	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-T	A	F	Pts
Chambers	36	6-21	6-8	1-4	5	4	18
McDaniel	37	12-27	1-2	7-9	0	3	25
Lister	32	9-12	2-4	8-17	0	3	20
Ellis	36	7-22	3-3	1-3	2	3	17
McMillan	31	3-3	0-0	0-4	12	5	6
Johnson	16	1-2	2-2	1-6	0	5	4
Lucas	19	4-7	0-2	2-9	1	5	8
Young	17	0-2	2-2	0-0	1	0	2
Stansbury	10	1-4	0-0	0-1	1	1	2
Williams	6	0-1	0-0	0-1	2	1	0
Totals	240	43-101	16-23	20-54	24	30	102

FG% .425, FT% .695; Three-pt. goals: 0-5, .000 (Chambers 0-2, Ellis 0-2, Young 0-1).Team Rebounds: 9; Blocked Shots: 7 (Chambers 2, Johnson 1, Ellis 1, Lister 2, McDaniel 1). Turnovers: 14 (Chambers 2, McDaniel 1, Lister 2, Ellis 1, McMillan 2, Johnson 2, Lucas 1, Young 1, Williams 2). Steals: 8 (McDaniel 1, Lister 1, Ellis 4, Lucas 1, Williams 1). Technical Fouls: Illegal Defense 2, Seattle coach Bickerstaff 1:49 3rd Qtr. Team: 23, 4th.

Seattle	29	32	19	22 — 102
BOSTON	26	23	29	26 — 104

A — 14,600; T — 2:13.
Officials — Jack Nies, Ronnie Nunn

Celtics, 113 — Bulls, 99
at Boston Garden
CELTICS

	Min	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-T	A	F	Pts
McHale	41	10-14	9-9	4-9	3	2	29
Bird	42	11-18	12-13	1-8	9	3	37
Parish	43	7-13	1-2	1-7	2	3	15
Johnson	43	3-10	3-3	0-6	11	4	9
Ainge	34	7-10	0-0	0-4	8	5	15
Sichting	19	2-4	0-0	0-0	1	3	4
Roberts	11	1-2	0-0	0-4	0	2	2
Daye	8	1-3	0-0	0-0	0	0	2
Kite	1	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals	240	42-75	25-27	6-38	34	22	113

FG% .560, FT% .926; Three-pt. goals: 4-6, .667 (Bird 3-4, Johnson 0-1, Ainge 1-1). Team Rebounds: 7; Blocked: 9 (Bird 2, Johnson 1, McHale 2, Parish 3, Roberts 1). Turnovers: 16 (McHale 1, Bird 2, Parish 2, Johnson 5, Ainge 4, Roberts 2). Steals: 5 (Bird 1, Parish 1, Johnson 2, Ainge 1).

CHICAGO

	Min	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-T	A	F	Pts
Cureton	22	2-6	0-0	1-1	2	2	4
Oakley	38	4-13	8-10	6-13	2	5	16
Waiters	15	0-0	0-0	0-1	2	3	0
Paxson	39	5-12	2-2	0-5	4	3	12
Jordan	40	13-31	8-10	6-8	3	2	34
Turner	14	2-4	1-2	1-2	2	2	5
Corzine	14	2-4	0-1	3-4	0	1	4
Threatt	18	3-7	0-0	0-2	5	2	6
Banks	13	2-6	0-0	1-2	1	2	4
Sellers	25	6-8	2-4	3-6	0	5	14
Brown	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Myers	1	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals	240	39-92	21-29	21-44	21	27	99

FG% .424, FT% .724; Three-pt. goals: 0-3, .000 (Paxson 0-1, Jordan 0-1, Threatt 0-1).Team Rebounds: 7; Blocked Shots: 2 (Sellers 2). Turnovers: 12 (Oakley 3, Waiters 1, Paxson 2, Jordan 2, Corzine 1, Threatt 1, Banks 1, Sellers 1). Steals: 10 (Oakley 2, Paxson 1, Jordan 1, Turner 2, Threatt 1, Sellers 3). Technical Fouls: Collins (coach) 3:15, 3rd.

Chicago	20	21	26	32	— 99
BOSTON	30	34	21	28	— 113

A — 14,890; T — 2:03.
Officials — Paul Mihalik, Blane Reichelt

Boston Celtics Statistics

As of January 6th, 1987

WON 21, LOST 9

PLAYER	G	GS	MIN	-FIELD GOALS- FG	FGA	PCT	3-PT FG	3-PT FGA	-FREE THROWS- FT	FTA	PCT	--REBOUNDS-- OFF	DEF	TOT	AST	PF	DQ	STL	TO	BLK	PTS	AVG	HI
BIRD	27	26	1068	271	517	.524	35	81	147	163	.902	36	184	220	185	75	2	41	90	31	724	26.8	38
MCHALE	30	30	1197	304	507	.600	0	1	170	204	.833	103	206	309	95	99	0	14	86	67	778	25.9	34
PARISH	30	30	1136	231	427	.541	0	0	83	116	.716	107	215	322	66	100	3	34	68	59	545	18.2	34
JOHNSON	30	30	1178	174	381	.457	3	22	78	98	.796	18	91	109	221	79	0	25	69	17	429	14.3	27
AINGE	30	30	1178	174	381	.457	3	22	78	98	.796	18	91	109	221	79	0	25	69	17	429	14.3	27
ROBERTS	21	18	722	111	230	.483	16	40	41	46	.891	10	49	59	116	58	1	27	53	4	279	13.3	34
SICHTING	27	2	500	61	127	.480	0	3	54	71	.761	27	69	96	35	60	0	9	44	8	176	6.5	23
VINCENT	26	7	561	68	134	.507	3	7	20	23	.870	11	26	37	68	48	0	14	22	1	159	6.1	20
WEDMAN	26	7	561	68	134	.507	3	7	20	23	.870	11	26	37	68	48	0	7	15	1	62	3.6	9
DAYE (TOT)	17	5	168	21	48	.438	0	0	20	24	.833	4	11	15	19	13	0	7	15	1	62	3.6	9
DAYE (BOS)	11	0	86	9	23	.391	0	0	7	12	.583	2	11	13	6	9	0	4	14	2	25	2.3	9
CARLISLE	10	0	79	9	23	.391	0	0	7	12	.583	2	11	13	6	6	0	2	3	2	25	2.3	9
HENRY (TOT)	25	0	197	13	46	.283	5	12	9	10	.900	4	13	17	23	22	0	4	15	2	25	2.5	9
KITE	18	0	92	8	33	.242	1	11	7	10	.700	0	7	7	8	7	0	3	9	0	24	1.3	5
	26	0	209	14	39	.359	0	0	5	21	.238	22	30	52	7	44	0	8	9	13	33	1.3	6
CELTICS	30		7200	1298	2535	.512	63	170	640	806	.794	353	926	1279	850	626	6	191	505	205	3299	110.0	135
OPPONENTS	30		7200	1250	2739	.456	37	129	607	798	.761	470	813	1283	715	698	6	277	421	116	3144	104.8	122

Game by Game

Philadelphia 122 Boston 100 at The Spectrum, December 19

Julius Erving scored 24 points and Charles Barkley registered a triple-double (15 points, 14 rebounds, 11 assists) as the Sixers pulled away from a 69-64 advantage early in the third period to win easily. The loss was the second in three meetings for the Celtics against the 76ers with both defeats coming at the Spectrum. The Celtics lost 102-100 November 26. It didn't figure; the Celtics appeared to have been strengthening their defense (with 96 and 101 points allowed to New York and Indiana earlier in the week). But the 76ers rolled.

Philly's first half was sparked by the post-up and running game of Erving and the bench production of Roy Hinson, who would finish the game with 21 points. Barkley dominated play inside during the final 24 minutes, outfighting the Celtics numerous times off the glass and for loose balls on the floor.

Finally, there was both insult and injury.

"They're a beatable team," commented the Doctor after he had successfully completed surgery. "They are not blitzing the league this season."

These words were the echo of Barkley's earlier statement: "The Celtics will lose at least ten more games this season."

In the fourth quarter, there was the aforementioned injury. Ainge suffered a deep groin pull when he attempted to stop a Maurice Cheeks' drive in the 4th quarter. He sat out the remaining minutes of the game and after the contest, the coaching staff sent the player home rather than having him travel to Milwaukee.

It didn't figure. The victory was only the second for the Sixers in what would develop into an eight defeats in 10 games stretch—including home defeats to the young Cavs' and Jazz teams.

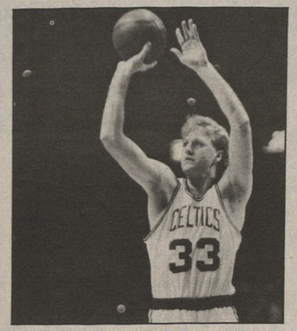
"We need to get back to our passing game," said Larry Bird after. Kevin McHale led the Celtics with 26 points, Robert Parish had 8 rebounds, and Dennis Johnson and Bird had 9 assists.

Milwaukee 120 Boston 100 at The Mecca, December 20

The Bucks outplayed the Celtics as the Green finished off a trying week which saw two fights, an injury to Danny Ainge and growing ailments which continued to plague Larry Bird, and finally, this defeat at The Mecca (hardly holy), which resulted in a desultory 22-point loss and the ejection of K.C. Jones and Chris Ford in the fourth quarter.

The team had been delayed in arriving into Milwaukee, busing up from Chicago and reaching the Hyatt in Milwaukee at 2 p.m. for the eight o'clock contest. And they seemed to have left the needed spark for a road win in transit, making only 6 shots (in 20 attempts) in the opening period. By this time, the Bucks, a veteran bonafide championship contender, had jumped all over their staggering opponents, the defending league champion. The Bucks ran off a 17-3 surge enroute to a 31-19 first period lead.

Why do teams slump? "It's a long season," asserts Robert Parish. "You go through ups and downs all year," says Jerry Sichting. "You just have to maintain your sense of purpose as a team."



Larry scored 37 against the Bulls.

Afterward, Larry Bird openly challenged the team in the press, as they readied for a week of practice before heading to the west coast for a post-Christmas 4-game road trip, which featured two back-to-back scheduled games.

The Celtics did intersperse some intensity with their eerie reluctance to scrap against the Bucks. They rallied in the third period behind McHale (who led the team again with 26 points and 8 rebounds) and Dennis Johnson. They cut an almost constant double-digit lead to four twice behind McHale-Parish-Bird-Johnson-Sichting. But the Bucks, led by 6th Man Rickey Pierce (29 points) and the starting backcourt of Craig Hodges and Paul Pressey (25 points-12 assists-9 rebounds) pulled ahead once more. Midway through the final quarter, Jones and Ford had had enough; they were ejected after arguing over a Dennis Johnson foul. Johnson coached the team in the final minutes.

Boston 123 Phoenix 112 at Memorial Coliseum in Phoenix, December 26

The Celtics exploded for 40 first quarter points and kept the youthful Suns at a safe distance throughout. Larry Bird tallied three first quarter 3-point field goals and the Celtics had one of their best nights of offensive execution in the entire season. When the Suns rallied in the 3rd quarter, paring a 15-point Celtics lead to 7 (78-71), the Celtics went inside repeatedly—to Kevin McHale. He finished with 32 points and added 15 rebounds, many off the offensive boards.

"I was pleased with the effort," said K.C. Jones. "We were determined to come in and get after it from the opening tap. I was glad to see that that was what we did."

Boston, which waived David Thirdkill three days earlier, received a timely contribution from Darren Daye (9 points, 2 assists, 3 rebounds) as the newly acquired Celtic spearheaded a strong effort from the bench. The Celtics' 6th and 7th men this season, Fred Roberts and Jerry Sichting, added 14 points and 8 points respectively. Phoenix, which trailed badly throughout until their second half rally, was led by Ed Pinckney's 19 points and Walter Davis' 18. But the story was the Celtics' renewed interest in matters; as pointed out by Bob Ryan in *The Boston Globe*, the Celtics registered a team season-high 38 assists, led by Danny Ainge's eight.

Boston 114 Los Angeles Clippers 101 at LA Sports Arena, December 27.

The Celtics won their second consecutive game on the trip by defeating the Clippers, 114-101. The Clippers played without former Celtic Cedric Maxwell.

The Celtics struggled with the Clippers, as the latter trailed by only 55-54 at halftime and were tied with the defending champions, 70-70 late in third period. But at this juncture, Dennis Johnson took over the game. He sparked a 7-point surge, pulling up on the break and nailing a long jumper as the execution on offense reached its final seconds on the 24-second clock. On the next possession, he made the vital pass which led to a Kevin McHale 3-point (conventional) play. Finally, he posted up as a play broke down and scored a fadeaway turnaround jumper. The Celtics surged out to a 15-point lead (102-87) and were safely in front to the end.

Larry Bird, whose individual offensive intensity returned this trip, led the Celtics with 27 points although he was angry over his shooting. McHale was held to six in the first half but finished with 23, McHale has scored over 20 points in every Celtics game this season, the only player in the league to have done this. Robert Parish and McHale led the team's rebounding with 12, and Johnson had 8 assists. Michael Cage led the Clippers' scoring with 21.

Boston 119 Sacramento 102 at Sacramento, December 28

Earlier this season, Robert Parish reflected on the teams which give him the most trouble; naturally, he listed the Lakers, Bullets, Houston, and New York. Nothing unusual there. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Moses Malone, The Twin Towers, and Patrick Ewing play the pivot on those ballclubs, respectively. The discussion returned to the teams which Parish had the most success against. Among this group, Parish listed Indiana and Sacramento. "Neither has a legitimate front court attack," he stated.

The Celtics pressed the issue underneath against the Kings and won with ease. It was their third straight triumph on a resurgent road sojurn through the western U.S. Also, it was their best two-way game since—minus Larry Bird—they defeated the Denver Nuggets and Philadelphia 76ers in back-to-back home games, December 3rd and 5th.

The Celts, for the second time in three games, lit up the home team with a shootout opening quarter. After scoring 40 in Phoenix, the Celts shot in 39 first quarter points in Sacramento. The Kings made a brief run at Boston, closing to 58-51 at the midway point of the second quarter, but Boston recovered quickly and never allowed the Kings to come closer in the second half. For the second straight game, Larry Bird led the Celtics with 27 points, scoring many off of offensive execution. Kevin McHale and Bird each pulled down 11 rebounds to lead the team in that category. Dennis Johnson, who shot 9 of 11 from the field, led the Celtics in assists with 8. Joe Kleine led the Kings with 17, many of these coming in the latter stages, when the victor had been determined.

Boston 104 Seattle 102 at the Seattle Coliseum, December 30

The Celtics won the final game of their brief western road trip by coming from fifteen points behind to win in the final minute. Larry Bird hit the game-winner, a jumper from the right side. Dennis Johnson secured the victory by blocking Dale Ellis' shot as time was running out.

Bird led the Celtics in scoring with 27 points on 10-19 shooting. Robert Parish added 23 and Kevin McHale scored 17 with 11 rebounds. For McHale, it was the first time this season he did not score at least 20 points in a game, the longest (28 games) streak in the NBA this season.

The middle-level Sonics actually dominated the contest throughout the first two-and-a-half quarters of the ballgame, receiving scoring from Xavier McDaniel (25 points-9 rebounds), rebounding from Alton Lister (career-high 17 rebounds) and running from people like Ellis and rookie Nate McMillan—12 assists. Seattle led 61-49 at the half and threatened to blow the Celtics out in the third period.

But the Celtics survived, mainly through the efforts of Green Team players like Darren Daye, Rick Carlisle, Jerry Sichting, and Greg Kite. These players pressed the Sonics, who reverted into a turnover-plagued unit as the third quarter came to a close. A ten-point spurt in the late stages of that stanza enabled the Celtics to head into the final period trailing only by two.

With the starters fully rested, Boston fell behind again, by a 92-85 count, before making their final rush behind the front-court scoring.

Boston 113 Chicago 99 at Boston Garden, January 2

Larry Bird scored 37 points and Dennis Johnson held Michael Jordan in check (34 points and only 3 assists) as the Celtics returned to the Boston Garden. The Celtics broke away from the Bulls with a 12-4 spurt from late in the first period through the second period, 32-22, behind Bird's 12 points. After the Green Team battled evenly with the visitors through the middle of the 2nd quarter, the starting quintet (Bird-Johnson-Kevin McHale-Robert Parish-Danny Ainge) were on the floor as the Celtics closed the half with a 15-1 surge. All five players entered the scoring column in that rally, featuring fast breaks and offensive execution.

The Bulls attempted to rally at the beginning of the fourth quarter. "There is a tendency for a team to lose its intensity when they have that great a lead," commented Scout Ed Badger afterward.

A pressing Bulls' unit, utilizing Jordan, Sedale Threatt, Charles Oakley, and rookie Brad Sellers gamely cut into the margin, reducing a Celtic 85-67 lead to 96-87 when Jordan flew across the lane at 5:16.

But Bird, (shooting freely from the outside), and McHale took over in the final stages, scoring the Celts' final fifteen points. McHale worked the inside and Bird sent the fans home with a 3-point field goal in the open floor at 2:35, increasing the Celtic margin to 107-93.

"When the Celtics are executing," said Bulls' Coach Doug Collins later, "there's not too much a young team can do. I was proud of our team for coming back the way we did. It was a victory of sorts."

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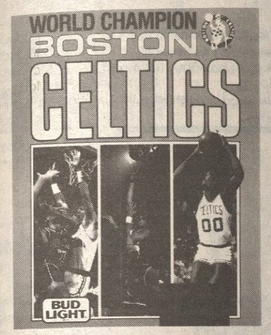

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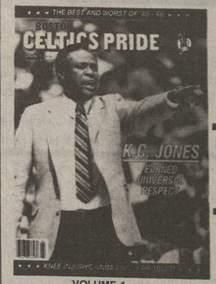

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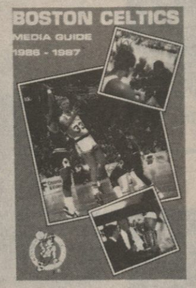

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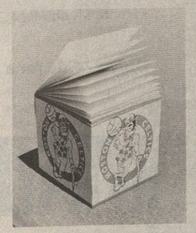

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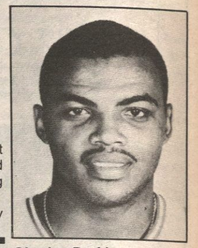
Larry Bird

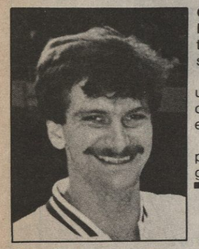
Larry Bird on living and playing in Boston: "I don't want to buy a $2 million estate and have it fenced in so people can't get over the walls. If people want to drive by the house and blow their horn, that's fine. The people of Boston have been unbelievably great to me, and I've paid them back with victories and championships, because that's what they want."



Charles Barkley

Charles Barkley, Philadelphia Forward, on his desire to beat the Celtics: "I don't ever want to lose to the Celtics. They rub it in when they beat you. I've never liked them. Nobody likes them. That's because they're cocky, obnoxious, talking junk.

"You'd need to be on the court with them to realize how good they think they are. It's in (Danny) Ainge's blood. He's ruined for life."

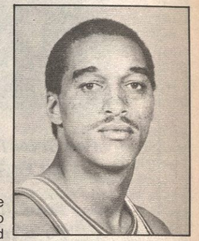


Greg Kite

Greg Kite on his fight with Patrick Ewing and the subsequent $3,000 fine on the New York Center (during the Celtics' 107-96 win in New York, December 16): "I think the fine is a farce. I don't think it's a deterrent. He'll pay the fine, but what's to say he won't do it again?

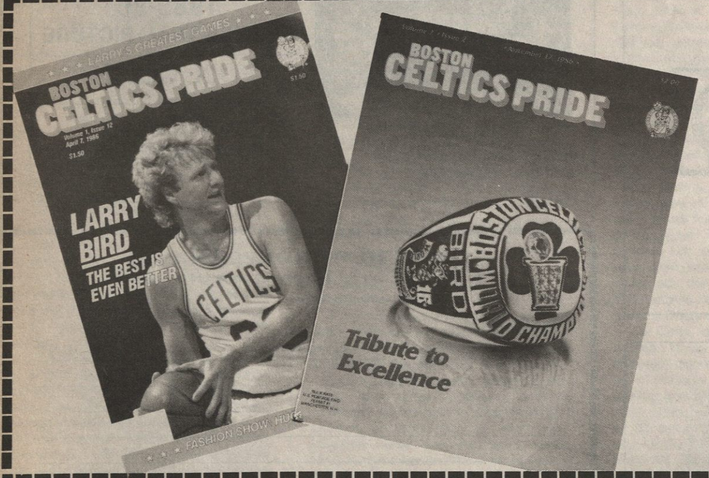
"The punching was totally unprovoked. If I would have retaliated, then both of us would have been ejected. But I thought it wasn't right that he wasn't thrown out of the game right there, but the referees probably didn't see the elbows. You can't expect the referees to see everything.

"The fine's a farce because it's not a deterrent. The whole system of fining people is based on precedence, and if they would just suspend people for one game then I think it would be equal for everyone."



Dennis Johnson

Dennis Johnson on the Celtics defense in December: "I don't know what it is. We get to the point where we'll work for 19 seconds and then let it go, and you can't do that. Then they'll get second shots. But on a positive note, we did put two good offensive games together, so we must be doing something right."



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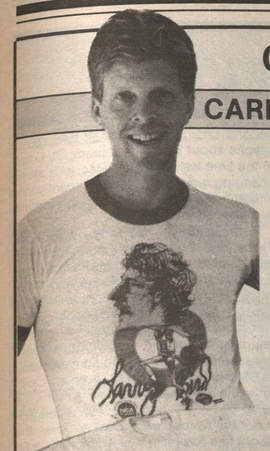

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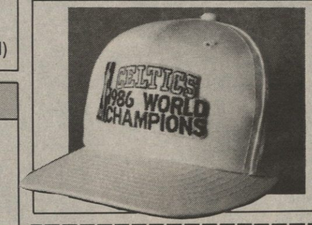

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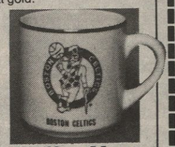

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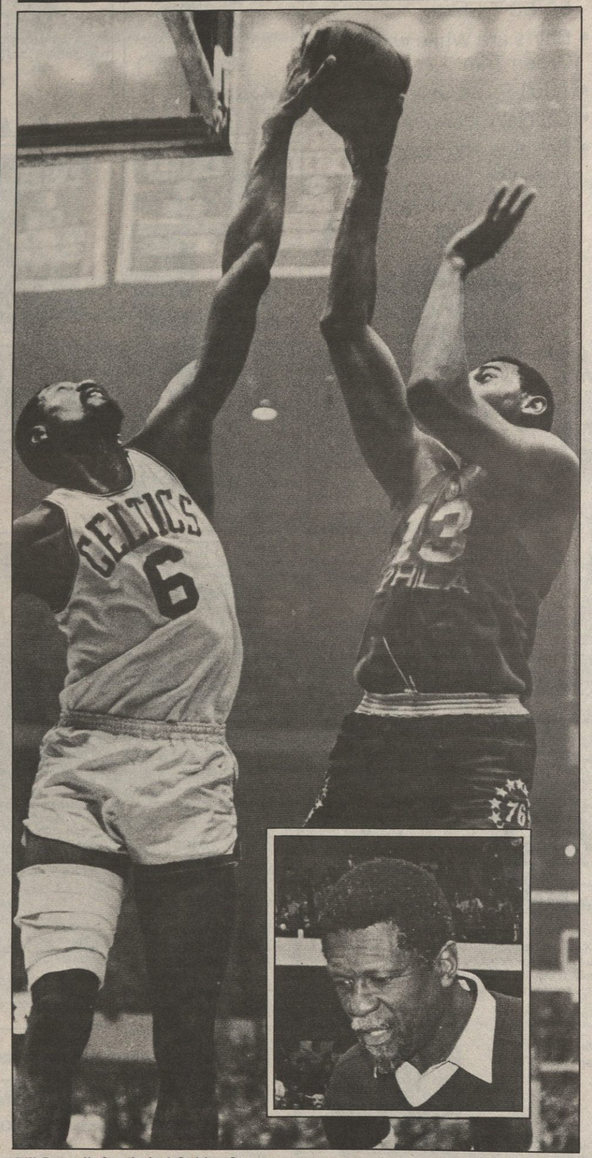

Bill Russell: Symbol of Celtics Success.

In his book, *Red Auerbach: On and Off the Court,* Red Auerbach described his need of Bill Russell's abilities as simply, "someone to get us the ball." Russell's character, his personality were unique, however; they drove the player and produced the most dominating player in the history of team sports.

Through 1955-56, the Celtics were a middle class outfit when the victories were being doled out to champions at the end of NBA seasons. An irony: the Celtics, now an *American* symbol (beyond the boundaries of the basketball court) of teamwork, sacrifice and collaboration, were, in the years before Russell, a high-powered offensive machine. Bob Cousy, Bill Sharman, Arnie Risen, Frank Ramsey, and Ed Macauley could put points on the board and run Auerbach's fast break with excitement and style. But even in their best pre-Russell year, 1952-53, when they finished 46-25, the Celts were bounced before the final round of the playoffs. In sports, even the most valiant of efforts breaks down if enough talent is missing. In 1955-56, Russell's senior year at the University of San Francisco, the Celtics had fallen to 39-33 (which actually was an improvement from the previous season's .500 mark, 36-36).

Bill Russell's credentials: at McClymonds High School in the Bay area, three losses in three years. At USF, with K.C. Jones, a 90-11 record including two unbeaten seasons, two NCAA titles, and a record 57 game winning streak. Finally, Russell led the United States Olympic team to a gold medal in the Melbourne Games in the fall of 1956 after he was in the Celtics fold. Red Auerbach's coach, when the young Auerbach was playing at George Washington, Bill Reinhard, saw Russell when the latter was a sophomore and immediately called the Celtics coach. "You've got two years to plan, Red," said Reinhart. "This kid is something special."

Russell was the ideal center for the Celtics fast break offense—originated by Reinhart and perfected by his student Auerbach; Russell was defense-oriented, had great jumping ability, blocked shots left-handed, which meant he was always rejecting shots from the same side of the body that right-handed shooters used. Russell was a superior athlete, fast enough to qualify for the Olympic Track team, too. And he was a courageous and proud man who braved some ugly racial scenes in the south to become stronger personally and more complete professionally.

Russell would persist in his winning ways and meanwhile would transform the history of the Celtics franchise. In addition to his amateur record, he led the Celtics to 11 titles in 13 seasons.

As the Celtics' need for a defensive center who could rebound became more acute in the 1955-56 season, Red Auerbach went to work. In the upcoming draft, the Rochester Royals had the first choice in the whole draft, but the Celtics were certain that owner Les Harrison would select Si Green, the All-American guard from Duquesne. The Royals already had Maurice Stokes—later crippled with a form of sleeping sickness and confined to a wheelchair, paralyzed, for over ten years. Stokes was a superior player, 6-8 with Elgin Baylor-type offensive skills. The Royals did interview Russell about the prospects of having him join them, but reportedly Russell was upset about the way the interview was conducted. The St. Louis Hawks had the second choice, and Russell had reservations about joining that team; St. Louis at the time was still burdened with slow-changing racial attitudes, two scant years after the Supreme Court decision forcing desegregation of schools.

Red Auerbach had worked for Ben Kerner, the owner of the Hawks, several years before when the Hawks were the Tri-Cities Blackhawks (Moline and Rock Island, Illinois and Davenport, Iowa). The two men had a stormy relationship before and after the Russell deal. Auerbach resigned from the midwestern team because he felt Kerner would never stop interfering with on-court events. Later, when the Celtics and the Hawks met in the 1956-57 NBA final series, Auerbach punched Kerner in a dispute over the height of a basket in Keil Auditorium in St. Louis.

Celtics owner Walter Brown is said to have remarked, "the only way you can make a deal is if they think they've got you." Auerbach offered Kerner St. Louis native Ed Macauley, who had been MVP of the 1951 All-Star Game and was a prolific offensive player. In addition, Macauley had been an outstanding player for St. Louis University and had considerable gate appeal in an area which never did support professional basketball before the Hawks did leave in 1968. The Celtics used this as a bargaining chip; would the Hawks be willing to wait for Russell since he was playing in the autumn Olympic Games and wouldn't join them until mid-season? The Hawks purchased the Celtics' logic and prepared to close the deal, but hedged at the last moment. In 1953, Auerbach had drafted Ramsey, Cliff Hagan, and Lou Tsirpoulos as futures from the scandal-plagued University of Kentucky championship team. Before these players participated, the UK team had been implicated in a wave of gambling influenced contests, forcing the Wildcats to cancel a season. The three great players were somewhat forgotten; in addition, they were in the military service during the Korean conflict. But their talents were credible. Ramsey and Hagan were elite players, Frank with saavy and skill to become the game's first important "6th Man", and Hagan a master hook shooter who patrolled the front court for the Hawks at 6-4. Kerner insisted the Celtics add Hagan to the deal and the Celtics quickly agreed. Interestingly, according to Tom Heinsohn, Hagan was one of the few players whose shot Russell could not block. Dick Barnett was another.

Russell joined the Celtics at mid-season. In his first game as a Celtic, Russell played twenty-one minutes, scored six points and pulled down sixteen rebounds. He ignited several fast break attacks to Cousy by grabbing the defensive rebound, and before coming down, firing the outlet pass to Cousy to instantly create a transition from defense to offense. Later, in the first game of the playoffs, Russell established himself immediately against the Syracuse Nats, pulling down thirty-one rebounds and blocking twelve shots. In the rookie's first season, the Celtics won their first championship. The Celtic dynasty had begun, uniting the genius and competitive fire of Auerbach, Cousy, and Russell.

JANUARY

HOME AND AWAY SCHEDULE...
Home Games

BOSTON CELTICS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 CHICAGO BULLS 7:30 WRKO RADIO SPORTS CHANNEL	3
4	5	6	7 MILWAUKEE BUCKS 7:30 WRKO RADIO SPORTS CHANNEL	8	9 SACRAMENTO KINGS 7:30 WRKO RADIO SPORTS CHANNEL	10 DETROIT PISTONS 7:30 WRKO RADIO WLVI-TV56
11	12	13 NEW JERSEY NETS 7:30 WRKO RADIO WLVI-TV56	14 DALLAS MAVERICKS 7:30 WRKO RADIO SPORTS CHANNEL	15	16 CLEVELAND CAVALIERS 7:30 WRKO RADIO SPORTS CHANNEL	17
18 HOUSTON ROCKETS 12:00 WRKO RADIO SPORTS CHANNEL	19 NEW YORK KNICKERBOCKERS 1:00 WRKO RADIO WLVI-TV56	20	21 INDIANA PACERS 7:30 WRKO RADIO SPORTS CHANNEL	22	23 ATLANTA HAWKS 7:30 WRKO RADIO SPORTS CHANNEL	24
25 PHILADELPHIA 76ers 1:30 WRKO RADIO SPORTS CHANNEL	26	27 CHICAGO BULLS 7:30 WRKO RADIO WLVI-TV56	28 CHICAGO BULLS 7:30 WRKO RADIO SPORTS CHANNEL	29	30 INDIANA PACERS 7:30 WRKO RADIO WLVI-TV56	31

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Celtics Greats

Success in Two Worlds
John Thompson

John Thompson: Valuable backup to Russell.

The Coach of the 1984 NCAA collegiate basketball champions, John Thompson, played for the Boston Celtics from 1964-66. If John Thompson has a first-hand working knowledge of how to develop centers, psychologically and in technique, consider that as a collegiate he played the pivot on a team which went deep into the NIT, chiefly because Thompson did much of the overlooked work on the backboards. In the NBA, of course, Thompson played backup center to Bill Russell, who was the best.

"The Celtics always had the notion that they could win," observes Thompson about his former professional team. "They always brought in the right type of people who would make sure they would win."

"John Thompson knows how to develop young players." Russell states. "As players and as people."

Thompson was the second black coach (Russell the first) to capture a major sports title when he led the Georgetown Hoyas to the 1983-84 NCAA title. Georgetown, behind Patrick Ewing, won over the Houston Cougars in Seattle that year. It was a triumph which culminated three seasons of work during the Ewing era. It was also a controversial team. Thompson placed restrictions on interviews given by the young players and it was a decision which met with comparable resistance and antipathy among much of the press which covered the team. Thompson has never lost sight of the ultimate purpose of collegiate athletics: education, but his teams have succeeded on the floor, too.

The season before Thompson went to Georgetown, 1972-73, the Hoyas finished a bleak 3-23. Thompson had compiled a 128-22 record at St. Anthony's High School in Washington, D.C., and he gradually rebuilt the Hoyas' program. Opportunities for a black to coach a major collegiate program, despite the predominance of black players, are few. But Thompson has been a giant success.

The ultimate success on the floor came with Ewing in the pivot. Thompson has retained his close ties with the Celtics and Red Auerbach and the latter has been a staunch supporter of Thompson since the former Celtic was hired at Georgetown.

"People always talk about the job John did with Ewing on the team," Auerbach commented. "but I think his best job came with teams before then, the ones that weren't as talented.

Ewing's Georgetown team went to the NCAA FInal game in 1981-82, where in one of the most exciting finals ever, North Carolina, with James Worthy, Michael Jordan, and Sam Perkins, edged out Georgetown, 65-64. Jordan's sideline jumper with seconds remaining was the deciding basket and Worthy's steal of a Fred Brown pass clinched it. The errant Brown pass—Brown mistakenly threw the ball directly to James, thinking he was one of his teammates—would be vindicated two years later. But the youngster had committed a tragic turnover before millions observing via television. In one of sport's classiest moments ever, Thompson immediately went over to the youngster and embraced him. It proved victory could be achieved in life's hardest way, through maturity and learning to bear defeat. That Thompson reacted so spontaneously made the act that much more meaningful.

"Georgetown's triumph in 1984 was met with less enthusiasm in other quarters," wrote the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction winner, John Wideman in 1984. "In a society accustomed to assigning race as a reason for both the success and failures of its citizens, the blackness of Thompson and his team could not be treated as incidental to their achievement. The young athletes from Georgetown and the huge man who guided them through their championship season quickly became symbols."

If in their victory season the Georgetown program evoked anger, in the chilling defeat in New Orleans to North Carolina, Thompson and program insisted on the realistic need for compassion and perspective in the culture's mad affair with winning and its neglect of the vanquished.

Was there a more interesting team than the Georgetown Hoyas in the Ewing championship years? There was the defeat to Carolina, and a following season when Ewing and group were defeated in a memorable showdown with Virginia and Ralph Sampson. In 1983-84, the championship, as Ewing controlled the action on the floor, received help from players like David Wingate and Reggie Williams, and the team under Thompson artfully combined the slowdown game (4-corners) with the raw talents of his players within a disciplined offensive/defensive scheme. In Ewing's final season, the Hoyas swept through the regular season and the tournament before falling in the final to Villanova and Ed Pinckney, as the Wildcats shot an incredible 75% from the floor.

Yet the point of the Thompson program has been two-fold: fulfilling of athletic and personal potential. Hence, there is a woman like Mary Fenlon, the academic coordinator who has worked closely with Thompson since the coach arrived there fifteen years ago. Hence there is the wariness of the maddening media rush and ancillary doings surrounding Big-Time sports at the collegiate level.

"These are kids," Thompson insists. "I don't ever want to lose sight of the fact that we are developing young people's lives at Georgetown. People criticized us for the way we supposedly sheltered Patrick while he was here.

"But he seems to be handling himself quite well in the pros." Most scouts and assistants continued to be surprised at the professionalism Ewing maintained with Hubie Brown, for example.

"Patrick's much too sensitive," commented one assistant coach in the fall, before Brown was relieved. "There is no way Patrick can ever play his best there."

Thompson is married and has three children, two young men (20 and 17) and a daughter, 11. He has succeeded at the highest level within the NCAA—his team is again ranked in the Top Ten, and he has risen to the top of the coaching fraternity—he will coach the 1988 United States Olympic Team, following in the footsteps of Dean Smith, who with Auerbach, remains one of his most influential teachers.

The wave of problems related to eligibility and drugs have made Thompson's views and practices much better understood by the public now, although being understood personally has never mattered too much to Thompson.

John Thompson has a program at Georgetown which exists as a model for others in the NCAA. His program is disciplined, there is an attentiveness to education, and the idea of the game is successfully enacted each time the Hoyas take the floor. Thompson stated his view.

"My priority is the game, the kids I'm working with, and the work that we have to do to get it done. I care about image, but only as it pertains to what we're trying to accomplish at Georgetown."

Solution To Celtics Puzzle

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